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Status, behavior, and appearance among African Americans in a midwestern coal mining town, 1900-1923

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Status, behavior, and appearance among African Americans in a
midwestern coal mining town, 1900-1923

by

Marlena Thomas Beavers

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Textiles and Clothing

Major Professor: Jane Farrell-Beck

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1997

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ABSTRACT

The distinction of status groups and classes is one that is important, though often confused and overlooked in studies of the African American community. This research focuses on social status in a predominantly black coal mining community from 1900 to 1923. The first objective of the study was to examine social structure in predominantly African American, industry-based community. The second objective was to determine the criteria used in African American communities to establish levels of status. The third objective was to investigate whether standards of appearance were used in making status distinctions in an African American coal mining community. The study also examined the criteria used to distinguish between social status and determined whether clothing played a part in assigning social status in the Buxton coal mining community.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Buxton's Origins, Demographics, and Environment

Buxton had its beginnings in Muchakinock, an Iowa coal mining town that existed 24 years prior to Buxton's establishment. The mines at Muchakinock were operated by H. W. and W. W. McNeill and coal was transported by the Chicago and North Western Railroad. As the result of a labor dispute that began in 1875 over the methods used to pay employees, the once prosperous mines at Muchakinock lay idle for three years, which prompted the McNeills to sell their interest in the mines to the Chicago and North Western Railroad for \$500,000 (Olin, 1965; Rye, 1972; Schwieder, Hraba, & Schwieder, 1987). The sale of the company was completed in 1881 and the Chicago and North Western Railroad named the new mining company the Consolidation Coal Company. John Emory Buxton was hired to manage the mines and recruit new workers. The new recruits unknowingly would be strikebreakers (Bergmann, 1969).

Recruiters went to Virginia and other southern states primarily to interest black workers in coming to Iowa. Southern states were viewed as a source of "good" and "cheap" black labor. One of the most successful recruiters was Hobe Armstrong, a local business man who was black or of "mixed races." This was probably a good choice from the company's perspective and from the black perspective; people who had a "white" heritage were looked upon as leaders of the race and models of success. This probably helped Mr. Armstrong in his recruitment efforts. He recruited a large number of blacks to come to work in the mines and learn the trade as they earned above average wages. Recruitment efforts helped to increase the black population of Muchakinock to between 55 percent and 75 percent in 1885 (Rye, 1972, p. 940; Schwieder et al. 1987, p. 4).

In 1900, the Consolidation Coal Company purchased land in Mahaska and Monroe counties. The 8600 acres in Monroe county eventually became Buxton, named after the superintendent who managed the company from its beginning in Muchakinock, J. E. Buxton. Shortly after the move to Buxton, J. E. Buxton retired and turned over the management of

the Consolidation Coal Company to his son, Benjamin Buxton (Shiffer, 1964; Swisher, 1945).

The move to Buxton proved to be excellent in terms of coal mining yields. The land was laden with coal and provided financial opportunities for any man who was willing to work hard and long hours for higher than average wages. The company set out immediately to build houses for workers. The houses were standard frame houses on a small acreage that was in most cases large enough for a garden and a few farm animals. Schools were built and churches were established (Shiffer, 1964; Swisher, 1945).

There is some disagreement about the population of Buxton that can be clarified to some extent from census data. Census data from 1895 to 1925 place the population between five and six thousand people with approximately four thousand of that number classified as black (Iowa Census, 1895, 1905, 1915, 1925; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1920). The figure of four to five thousand was calculated on data from the 1895 state census and 1900 federal census which was conducted in Muchakinock prior to the move to Buxton. The four to five thousand figure is approximate and based also on the state and federal censuses taken between 1900 and 1925. It must be stated that during these years, the procedures for the collection and analysis of data were flawed. The figures reported here are very close to accurate based on the analysis of census data and estimates of other researchers (Rutland, 1956; Rye, 1972). Four to five thousand was a significant number of blacks for one community in the state of Iowa and drew much attention to the region.

Though there is some question as to whether Buxton was a planned city, several factors support that it was a planned community. The site selected for the town was a hill, which immediately alleviated the drainage problems that were present in most Iowa coal mining towns. The physical structure of Buxton was also very different from that of most Iowa coal mining towns. It was clear that the town was planned to last longer than most towns. The size of the company store and the extent of the merchandise available there were indicators of planning to meet the needs of a community. The forty-plus small business establishments that were owned by a number of blacks in the community also implied that the community would be operating longer than typical mining camps. The recreational

facilities -- two YMCAs, a bandstand, parks, grade schools, a high school, and numerous churches -- all pointed towards a planned community that made available to residents many social, educational, religious, and cultural activities. In Gradwohl and Osborn's (1984) research, which involved an archaeological investigation of the Buxton townsite, there is evidence that systematic planning and thought went into organizing the Buxton community. Gradwohl's research revealed that Buxton was a community of facilities that supported cultural enrichment and recreational activities. It had water and electrical utilities for the industrial, residential, and business operations. It also had a clearly defined business district and a street system. All of these factors support that it was a planned community (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984).

Buxton was described as a "black utopia" by some of the residents who lived there. This predominantly black coal mining community provided a "unique" living experience. At a time when oppression and Jim Crow laws were prevalent in the South and urban ghettos were beginning to develop in the North, Buxton represented a relatively benign living environment. Residents of this Iowa coal mining town enjoyed steady employment, above-average wages, decent housing, and minimal racial discrimination (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984; Schweider et al., 1987).

The working people of Buxton included shopkeepers, professionals, and business people who were not directly associated with the coal mining industry but had a vested interest in the community. Buxton had doctors, lawyers, shop owners, saloon keepers, and cultivated state and community leaders. It was a center of activity and business for blacks in southeastern Iowa. Many community activities were centered in the church, the YMCA, and recreational activities which included the baseball and basketball teams, the Buxton bands, and fraternal organizations (Shiffer, 1964).

Comparison and Contrasts to Other Coal Mining Towns

Buxton had similarities and dissimilarities to other coal mining towns. It was similar to other coal mining communities in that the coal company was the financial base of the community. Most residents were there for the sole purpose of mining coal. There was evidence of standardized living in the houses that were built, provisions for transportation to

and from work, and avoidance of setting up a formal governance structure in the community. Unions were organized to protect the interests of the miner and serve as “challenger” to the company management and policies. Unlike other coal mining companies, Consolidation Coal Company was held in high regard by most Buxton residents primarily because of its non-discriminatory practices. The Consolidation Coal Company was non-discriminating in payments of wages and salaries, in the educational services provided for families and coal miners, and in housing assignments. This dissimilarity exemplifies that the Consolidation Coal Company supported a community in which blacks could thrive and develop to their fullest potential. This created an unusually high level of trust between the company and most miners and residents of the community (Schwieder et al., 1987).

The other dissimilarity involves the concept of “welfare capitalism.” There is some question as to whether “welfare capitalism” was a part of the Consolidation Coal Company’s planning and management of the community. Welfare capitalism refers to “any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law” (Brandes, 1976, p. 66). The basic premise of “welfare capitalism” was that improved living conditions would produce a more contented worker and in turn reduce union activity and unrest in the community. To take this premise further: the more satisfied the worker, the greater the chances for the demise of union activities and influences. Company operators believed that as an end product of the implementation of this philosophy in industrial communities, a better (more temperate, intelligent, thrifty) workman would evolve (Brandes, 1976).

It is not clear whether Ben Buxton was aware of this philosophy and used its tenets but there is evidence that he practiced some of its principles in Buxton. Residents of Buxton experienced very good living conditions when compared with other coal mining communities. Substantial homes with five to six rooms were built. Parks and two YMCAs were constructed for adults and boys. All of these facilities contributed to creating a model community in which residents could be comfortable in an improved physical environment. Even the operations related to housing and shopping policies were not typical of most coal mining communities. The company rented land on which residents were allowed to build

homes. Miners and their families could shop at a number of private establishments in the Buxton community. These practices were prohibited in most coal mining towns (Brandes, 1976; Wright, 1908). Many coal companies viewed housing and company scrip as primary means of social controls. It is doubtful that Consolidation's primary goal in incorporating policies related to welfare capitalism was to squelch unionization. In 1900 Buxton miners joined the United Mine Workers of America without incident. There was no evidence that stated that the company objected in any form or fashion to the unionization of its workers. There were few problems in the Buxton community regardless of whether Consolidation Coal Company's plan was to prevent unrest and union uprisings (Schwieder et al., 1987).

Buxton existed for over 20 years in southeastern Iowa. It thrived for 14 of 23 years and began to show a decline in 1914 from which it never recovered. The decline was attributed to several factors. Personnel changes and employee moves were a factor. The closing of several mines contributed to a decline in population. The change in company personnel brought about changes not only in the company administrative offices but in other areas such as the company store. This had a direct impact on the number of blacks hired into non-mining positions with the company. A number of fires destroyed successful businesses which prompted businesspeople to leave Buxton and start anew in other places. A new mine at Haydock opened and the company proceeded to transfer workers there between 1914 and 1919. By December of 1922, all of the miners had made their move to Haydock. The last miners' train from Buxton to outlying camps ran in September of 1923 and so marked the end of Buxton, the thriving coal mining town in southeastern Iowa (Schwieder et al., 1987).

Buxton's Enduring Appeal

Buxton has attracted the interest of different groups since its establishment in 1900. Scholars and educators, newsmen, historians, and the black community have shown repeated interest on the topic. There is an interest in Buxton for several reasons. Buxton was a unique community. Hubert Olin (1965), a researcher on Iowa coal mining communities, viewed Buxton as a coal mining settlement that set traditions above those of typical coal mining camps. Understanding how and why it worked out that way is of interest to many researchers. In the early twentieth century, a town like Buxton was highly unusual for Iowa

and for the nation. The Buxton experience is significant to the history of Iowa, the United States, and the black race. It creates a better understanding of blacks as a race and their relation to society. It also helps in gaining a better perspective on the cultural environment in which blacks lived during this era. The academic world often excludes the black experience in community life in its research or if it is included, the information is narrow and biased; the study of Buxton makes a significant contribution to studies on the black experience in America; the black perspective is provided. For the most part the Buxton experience is a positive account of black Americans who lived at the turn of the century. This serves as a balance to the many negative reports and images that are often highlighted in American history.

The primary reason I chose to study Buxton was because the resources available provided adequate documentation to study clothing and appearance in a predominantly black community. The images that I saw in the researchers' (Schwieder et. al) photographic collection of Buxton residents were very different from many of the images presented in history books throughout the U. S. They were pictures of dignified, proud, and successful black people who were the models of success for their time. There was also a limited amount of research completed on the use of textiles and clothing from a black perspective (Hunt, 1994 ; Tandberg & Durand, 1981). The research on Buxton allowed the opportunity to explore these areas. Finally, much of the research that has been conducted on blacks in the textiles and clothing field is from an etic (outsider) view. Research on African American dress has primarily been conducted by white academicians. I can provide an emic and etic dimension to the significant research that has been conducted. I provide an etic view in that I am an academician and will compare, analyze, and synthesize the data from that perspective. I add an emic dimension in that I am black and have lived the black experience. I was viewed as "one of us" by the informants and therefore received information that was not available to other researchers.

Purposes

The research questions were designed to explore information about status, status criteria, behavior, and clothing and appearance used by people in the Buxton community.

The primary objective of the study was to determine whether different status groups existed in Buxton and which criteria were used in determining status. The development of different status groups may not have been possible in such a transient community. The research also explored clothing and appearance and how it contributed to assignment of status in the community. The objectives of the study were to examine social structure in a predominantly black, industry-based community; to determine the criteria used in black communities to determine level of status; and to investigate whether standards of appearance were used in making status distinctions in black coal mining communities.

The distinction of status groups and classes is one that is important though often confused and overlooked in studies of the African American community. As defined by Landry (1987), status groups emerge out of the subjective evaluation of community members; classes are based on objective positions within the economic system. This concept, first introduced by Max Weber (1922/1978), extends the Marxian theory of a dichotomous social structure which consists of the "propertied" versus the "propertyless". Weber's theory goes beyond Marxian theory and considers class distinctions among the "propertyless" and the "wage earner." Status becomes a secondary mechanism of social ranking (Landry, 1987; Roth & Wittich, 1978; Weber, 1922). For additional information on status groups as defined in this study see Gerth and Mills' (1948) book *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (p. 180-195), Geschwender's (1978) *Racial Stratification in America* (p. 8-9), and Frazier's (1957) *The Black Bourgeoisie*.

Status groups in Weber's time (1864-1920) were distinguished by family background, economic standing, lifestyles, and restrictions on marriage partners and social interactions. The subjectivity in distinguishing status groups is directly related to the criteria used to determine whether a person is eligible for membership. Family background, home address, membership in social clubs and churches, consumption patterns, education, and skin color are some of the characteristics still used to determine status (Gatewood, 1990; Landry, 1987; Staples, 1976). Because status groups emerge on a subjective basis, it is typical that every community has a full range of groups from high to low (Frazier, 1957; Landry, 1987; Mullins & Sites, 1984).

Class, on the other hand, emerges from economic position whether it has been achieved independently or inherited. For any group of people who have been given the opportunity to participate in the full range of economic activity in society, a complete class system should develop. This has not been the case with African Americans because access to economic activity has historically been restricted; therefore, there are fewer levels of class. For the purposes of this study, status distinctions as opposed to class distinctions will be examined as they existed in Buxton, an Iowa coal mining community.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: SOCIAL STATUS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The review of literature will include a discussion of theorists Thorstein Veblen, Georg Simmel, and E. Franklin Frazier on social class; a discussion on theories related to clothing consumption; and finally a general discussion on status and how it is determined in different communities.

Social Class Theorists

Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel were contemporaries of the Buxton era and developed theories that had applications for the Buxton social structure. E. Franklin Frazier was a black social class theorist whose research focused on blacks and the black family.

Thorstein Veblen

Thorstein Veblen's theory on social class at the turn of the century is centered on the upper classes and their efforts to be distinguished from other classes. Veblen coined three phrases to describe the means by which the wealthy conspicuously displayed their prosperity -- conspicuous consumption, conspicuous leisure, and conspicuous waste. Conspicuous consumption referred to owning and displaying obviously expensive items to expose lifestyle and values to others. Conspicuous leisure referred to not having to do manual or industrial labor. A person who was displaying conspicuous leisure would not have to do "dirty" work. Conspicuous waste referred to spending money frivolously to display wealth.

In Thorstein Veblen's classic *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, he examined class structure and status assignment in society from a perspective of societal evolution. He specified two groups in his theory -- barbarian societies and upper classes. As described by Veblen, there are designators that distinguish the upper classes from the barbarian culture. First, in order to be considered a part of the upper class a person could have no association with industrial occupations. Veblen proposed that the upper classes were exempt from industrial employments, and that the exemption was the economic expression of their superior rank (Veblen, 1899). Second, the only honorable occupations for the upper classes were associated with warfare and priestly service. There was a diversified group of

occupations that was considered acceptable and categorized under the following areas - government, warfare, religious observances, and sports.

Veblen also thought that there were some communities of people in existence that were so barbaric that they did not have a defined leisure class. He stated that typically these were communities of small groups, simple people, poor and sedentary. A system of individual ownership was not a feature of these societies. There was little differentiation in their social structures. As these societies evolved and industrialization or modernization occurred, there was a transfer of efforts from getting the means for subsisting to acquiring goods for comfort and creating wealth. This resulted in a class struggle for attaining social leadership within society through acquiring property. Social leadership was manifested in the class struggle to establish supremacy.

Veblen's theory on class structure also included a concept he referred to as "pecuniary emulation" or an individual's efforts to equal or surpass the wealth of another. The concept of pecuniary emulation revealed a lot about class structure during the early twentieth century and has some application for the study of status levels in the Buxton community in that "ownership" is a key factor.

The leisure class evolved with the beginning of ownership. The earliest forms of ownership were in the relationship of men to women. In barbarian societies the women were owned by the men. Women were initially viewed as trophies; then the relationships evolved into an ownership-marriage arrangement with the male as the head of the household. This ownership eventually evolved into an extension to others such as slaves and other women outside of the marriage relationship. The desire to own men and women was eventually coupled with the desire to own things- products of industry (Veblen, 1899).

Veblen believed that if a system for ownership of property was present in a society, the economic process would reflect a struggle between men to acquire goods. This struggle, which was viewed as a struggle for subsistence, would occur naturally. For those engaged in the industrial process, the struggle went beyond getting the means of subsistence. The nature of the industrial process would allow for attaining a livelihood above the subsistence level. It would eventually develop into a struggle to attain the physical comforts of life which were

directly related to the consumption of goods. In a community where a few people own everything, there would be a powerful incentive for poor people to earn a living. Ownership would not be a realistic goal for the poor; however, meeting physical needs would be a motivating factor.

Ownership began by claiming and seizing, which was a predatory trait of primitive man. It developed into industry-based organizations with the sole economic foundation consisting of personal property, including slaves, and eventually developed into organizations that became self-sufficient industrial communities. At the end of this process, the possessor of the goods distinguished himself from others in the group based solely on what he owned. Property was viewed as trophy. The trophies represented successes scored in society. With the growth of industry, the possession of property or wealth became the primary designator of reputation and esteem in the community. Wealth was correlated with honor and conferred honor on its possessor. When the possession of property or wealth became the basis of esteem and reputation within a group, acquiring comparable amounts to other members of the group became important. The more satisfactory condition would be to accumulate wealth above and beyond other members of the group. What is the motivation and incentive for attaining wealth? Although esteem and envy by fellow men may have been motives for attaining wealth, the primary incentives according to Veblen were for added comfort and security.

Veblen's Theory as it relates to clothing consumption

Veblen also takes a critical look at the consumption patterns and lifestyles of the upper class as related to clothing.

Conspicuous consumption refers to wearing clothing that is conspicuously expensive. Upper class people who practiced conspicuous consumption wore the most luxurious fabrics and jewels and owned many different garments.

Veblen's upper class also practiced conspicuous leisure. Conspicuous leisure referred to an individual's necessity for work. If a man's livelihood was in manual or industrial labor, conspicuous leisure was not a part of his lifestyle. Any work that required getting dirty was unacceptable for "high status" people. In Veblen's era conspicuous leisure was

symbolized by a walking stick, shiny patent leather shoes, and a top hat. All of these clothing items were for the most part non-functional (Kaiser, 1985; Veblen, 1899).

Conspicuous waste referred to spending money incessantly. Obsolescence is an inherent quality of “faddish” fashions. If an individual spends money on clothing that is classified as faddish or trendy, then the implication is that the person is in an economic position which allows discarding garments that still have some utility. To avoid waste, classic clothes are purchased (Veblen, 1899).

Georg Simmel

Simmel (1904) was deeply influenced by Veblen. However, he rooted social class assignment in the human tendency to imitate (emulation in Veblen’s terms) and differentiate in different social settings. He applied these principles to fashion.

According to Simmel’s (1904) theory, innovation occurred when a subordinate social group, following the principle of imitation, sought to establish new status claims by adopting the symbols of superordinate group. The superordinate social groups differentiated by adopting new symbols, while abandoning old status symbols to the claims of subordinate groups. By discarding those symbols that were adopted by the subordinate group, the superordinate group preserved the status difference that the adopted symbols were used to signify.

This process of imitation and differentiation drove innovation and change because eventually the subordinate appropriated the symbol of the superordinate and a newer symbol was created. A self-perpetuating cycle of change is created that is mutually provoking. The superordinate and subordinate groups were always adjacent to one another in the larger social order.

E. Franklin Frazier

Elements of Veblen’s and Simmel’s theory on social class can be seen in Frazier’s assessment of class structure in the black community. Frazier’s book, *The Black Bourgeoisie* (1957) examined status in the black community from pre-Civil War to mid-twentieth century. The efforts to attain status in the community began with free Negroes who recognized that in order to elevate their status they had to purchase land. As early as the period following the

American Revolution, free Negroes bought land in New York and Pennsylvania. By 1830 free blacks owned about 32,000 acres of land. While under French rule in Louisiana, a small number of multi-racial free men purchased large plantations with slaves. Some of the plantations were valued from \$40,000 to \$200,000. In 1860 it was estimated that the holdings of some of the free Negroes who owned plantations in New Orleans were \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000. In this short excerpt the basic principles of theories on social class by Veblen and Simmel are demonstrated. Whether classified as “conspicuous” or defined as “imitation,” blacks acquired the symbols that would help define their status in the community.

In the early 1900s, as industrialization began to take root in the north, blacks migrated to northern cities for better opportunities. As blacks migrated to the north, they moved into positions that were not available to them previously. There were a number of reasons blacks experienced increased opportunities including a wider range of job opportunities, better educational opportunities, and newly acquired political power. So again we see blacks acquiring the symbols or privileges of the superordinate group, hoping to increase their status level in the community.

Frazier’s theory of the black middle class was based upon several principles. First of all, he stated that slavery was barbaric and cruel and destroyed the Negro as a person. Second, his theory stated that blacks were outsiders in American society since Emancipation. Third, his theory stated that blacks were at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder and that little economic progress was made; the economic position of black people in America had changed relatively little. Fourth, he stated that the black middle class consisted primarily of wage earners and salaried professionals and that “so-called Negro enterprises amounted to practically nothing in American economy” (Frazier, 1957, p.11). It is not unreasonable to suggest that based upon the principles stated above, black Americans would be prime examples of Veblen’s and Simmel’s theory on class structure.

Frazier’s controversial theory on the black middle class created much anger in the black community when it was first introduced. And yet, he made some valid points about the status of the black man in American society. Much of the theory centered on the processes

by which blacks had to attain status in the black community and society at large. Many of the status factors that Frazier mentioned in his book *The Black Bourgeoisie* are covered later in this chapter.

Theories Related to Status and Clothing Consumption

Buxton and its social class structure can also be examined from the perspective of its societal typology. *Gemeinschaft and gesellschaft* will be discussed.

Societal typology and clothing consumption

German sociologist Toonies (1940) described two societal types: *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*. Toonies developed this theory when industrialization was just beginning to evolve. The types are extremes and in most cases elements of one society can be found in the other. The *Gemeinschaft* society was a very simplified society. Meaningful relationships were at the center of this society. The clothes that were most prevalent in this society were hand crafted and reflect the artistic abilities of the producers. Typically the clothing of the *Gemeinschaft* society was very symbolic and served as a means of expressing who an individual was in relation to sex, age, and status in the community. Though the society was centered on conformity, variety and individualism were expressed in the clothing that was produced. There is little change in the styles of clothing because of the length of time it takes to produce them. The clothing that had the most unique and individualistic designs were probably produced by a dressmaker. The *Gesellschaft* society was centered in industrialization. Human behavior was motivated by the will to get ahead in the *Gesellschaft* society. Money was important in this society and there were concentrated efforts to move the society towards urbanization. Clothing in the *Gesellschaft* society became more simplistic with the introduction of mass production. The artistic value and uniqueness of dress found in the *Gemeinschaft* society was lost. As society became focused on industrialization, clothing items became more simple in design as they were manufactured and sold as ready-to-wear. The simplicity of the clothing designs became apparent as clothing was mass produced. With mass production the unique details were often lost in the designs due to the time factor and cost of labor. Therefore, there was some indication of social status reflected in the intricate details of clothing.

Another means of examining status and dress in society is by viewing it from a societal evolution perspective. Society can be assessed from the perspective of rural versus urban. Robert Redfield (1930, 1941) used this approach in examining the cultural differences among the Mexican people. Roach and Eicher (1965) took Redfield's theory and applied it to clothing production and the impact on mode of dress. Their research defined four types of societies - folk, agrarian, urban-industrial, and mass - and examined the characteristics of the clothing found in these societies. The *folk society* was clearly at the bottom of the evolutionary continuum. Clothing was simple and designed specifically for functional use. Land became the most valuable commodity and symbol of wealth and power in the *agrarian society*. There were more resources for acquiring clothing in this society. People of the agrarian societies produced garments from field to use. This involved growing and processing the fiber, weaving and coloring the fabric, and then cutting and constructing the fabric into a garment. There was no waste in the construction of garments which required efficient pattern layout. The class structure in an *agrarian society* was composed of an upper and lower class - no middle class. There was no evidence of social mobility in the agrarian society. Upper class people could afford fashion. Clothing for the upper classes was made from silk, velvets and other expensive materials. The lower classes had to focus on acquiring clothing for functional use. The lower classes generally wore clothing until it was worn out. Clothing that was purchased was functional and had simple designs. Clothing for the lower classes were made from cottons, or wools, for example.

Robert Redfield's (1930, 1941) typology of the urban-industrial society can be compared to the period of transition from Toonies' (1940) *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft* society. This phase represented the period in which American society became industrialized. Modernization in all phases of society, including clothing production, became the focus. Ready-to-wear clothing was not well received initially, but as the 1900s progressed improved manufacturing techniques helped to change consumers' notions about the quality of mass produced garments. In the urban-industrial society clothing became simple in design due to the move towards mass production. Fashions changed more quickly as manufacturers realized the profitability associated with fashion promotion and change. Some of the

symbolism in dress was lost due to inadequate time (due to quick changes in fashion) for meanings to be assigned to modes of dress. As a result, assigning meaning to clothing became more difficult. Also, industrialization and modernization created more leisure time, which increased personal leisure time and made fashion available to and affordable for most socioeconomic groups (Redfield, 1930, 1941).

And finally, the mass society evolved out of the post-industrial society. This society is characterized by increased industrialization and automation and higher labor costs. Mass behavior, mass culture, mass transportation, and mass media become the generating forces in the mass society. In the mass society, clothing and textiles production becomes labor intensive and yet manufactures try to reduce labor costs which results in contracting for off shore production in less developed countries (Redfield, 1930, 1941).

Social class and clothing consumption

Finally, social class and fashion behavior must be considered in this study of dress and appearance. There are some characteristics of the social classes related to dress that will provide some insights also into my findings and analysis of dress in the Buxton community.

According to Kaiser (1985), the uppermost classes have minimal concerns about fashion. The upper uppers typically purchase classic styles which will not lose their element of fashion. They are timeless. Upper upper class people do not feel the need to keep up with the latest fashion trends and have instead influenced fashion trends in many ways. Within the upper upper class structure, there are distinctions made between the old rich and the new rich. The old rich make great efforts to separate themselves from the new rich. This separation is accomplished through clothing by wearing the classic styles which are ultra conservative and made of the most expensive fabrics. The stereotypical image of clothing for the new rich is described as gaudy, expensive, and elaborate (Barber & Lobel, 1952).

The middle class, which is composed primarily of "white collar" workers, focuses much attention on fashion and views it as a means of attaining upward mobility in society. Middle classers sometimes view their station in life as unstable and ambivalent. As a means of dealing with the anxious feelings associated with moving up the social ladder they pick up status symbols of the socioeconomic group to which they aspire. C. Wright Mills (1951), a

noted sociologist, introduced the concept of “status panic” to explain this anxious behavior in white collar workers. Mills’ premise was that self esteem is related to the status system in which an individual interacts. When an individual is forced to interact in an unaccustomed environment, he or she adopts the symbols of the upper class to help with the uneasiness experienced at the higher class level. This concept can be applied to white collar workers and also to the “middle class” in general. The practice of adopting symbols of prestige is more important in urban settings because of anonymity. In urban settings, people typically are not knowledgeable of family backgrounds and socioeconomic status. Adopting symbols of prestige can help to create a false impression of individual status (Mills, 1951).

Finally, the working class is considered. Within the working class are middle and low class individuals. Within the working class there are individuals who make their money by selling services and labor in the workplace. The working class “blue collar” worker would typically work in the field or an industrial setting with little variation or independent thinking needed for performing the job. Clothing for the “blue collar” worker has to be durable and functional because of the amount of dirt associated with the task related to performing the job. Some wear uniforms; other “blue collar” workers select their own clothing with an emphasis on durability and functionality (Kaiser, 1985). In a study conducted by Useem, Tangent, and Useem (1942) in Prairietown, USA, the researchers discovered a difference in the way in which “uppers” and “lowers” viewed fashion. The “lowers” viewed the “uppers” as overly concerned with fashion and appearance. “Lowers” were far less concerned with fashion than “uppers” and spent a considerable amount of their time on worthwhile efforts such as church, family, work, and education.

In addition to the information on class, a study conducted with metal processing workers’ families provided enlightening information on the relationship between quality of clothing purchased and educational level of heads of households. Kundel’s study (1976) revealed that higher levels of education were correlated with higher degrees of formality in dress for work. The study also showed a correlation between job advancement and level of education, formality of work clothing, and preference for quality over quantity of clothing.

Status in the Black Community - Status Factors Imposed by Outside Circumstances

Status within the black community derives from the evaluation of community members from a subjective point of view. Max Weber proposed this measure of social ranking through the use of subjective criteria. He suggested that status characteristics emanate from the values of group members and change from place to place and group to group. Based on this premise, most communities have status groups ranked from high to low that represent different value structures (Roth & Wittich, 1978). Status characteristics used in ranking groups include family background, church and social club affiliations, consumption patterns, education, and skin color (Gatewood, 1988). Skin color was particularly important in determining position or status in the slave communities.

Historically blacks have been able to distinguish those status characteristics that had to be acquired to insure success and acceptance in the community. Many of those status characteristics were adopted from the white communities in which blacks were of the lowest or more realistically of "no" status. As a people, blacks have always been cognizant of the necessity of conforming to the methods, behaviors, and appearances of the community's dominant race. What "unnaturally" followed was the adaptation of the traditions, cultural mores, language, and appearances of the dominant culture. This theory of assimilation which required changing behaviors, appearances, mannerisms, as well as educational and social affiliations, was unrealistically adapted by many blacks in their quest to gain acceptance and success in society (Meier, 1962). The general premise was that when blacks could demonstrate elements of bourgeois living, they would be recognized as citizens in American society (Landry, 1987).

Position of person during period of slavery

The struggle to achieve equality in American society by adaptation of mores, culture, and appearances of others started long before the advent of the Civil War and has continued for generations of blacks. There have been numerous accounts written by educated slaves and free blacks that give some indication of the significance assigned to adopting the behaviors, mannerisms, and even dress of Euro-Americans. Austin Steward, an educated ex-slave,

provided a vivid account of the tendencies of house slaves to adopt mannerisms, language, and clothing of their masters. He made the distinctions between house slaves and field slaves very clear in his autobiography, which was written prior to emancipation. He stated:

It was about ten o'clock when the aristocratic slaves began to assemble, dressed in the cast-off finery of their master and mistress, swelling out and putting on airs imitation (sic) of those they were forced to obey from day to day. House servants were, of course, "the stars" of the party; all eyes were turned to them to see how they conducted, for they, among slaves, are what a military man would call "fugle-men." The field hands, and such of them as have generally been excluded from the dwelling of their owners, look to the house servants as a pattern of politeness and gentility. And indeed, it is often the only method of obtaining any knowledge of the manners of what is called "genteel society," hence, they are ever regarded as a privileged class; and are sometimes greatly envied, while others are bitterly hated. (Steward, 1857, pp. 30-32)

It was out of these groups of "house" and "field" slaves and "main house" and "field house" living arrangements that the beginnings of social structure in the black community emerged. The social dynamics of status in the black community must be examined from this historical perspective in order to see its significance clearly.

The house slaves and the field slaves were two distinct groups that white owners distinguished by skin color and, most commonly, unacknowledged kinship. Many house slaves were offspring of white owners and were extended special privileges for that reason. The close relationships associated with living in one house allowed house slaves to speak like and acquire the mannerisms of their white owners. This imitation of "white style" created an identification of house slaves with owners rather than with field slaves, who had not been exposed to such behaviors (Frazier, 1957).

Division of labor was also reflected in the distinctions made by the masters among house slaves and their offspring and field slaves. House slaves and their children were exposed to the customs and practices of their white owners and often learned crafts, skills, and behaviors that set them apart from the field slave community. Relatives of house slaves often were apprenticed to an artisan for training. These two groups -- house servants and apprenticed slaves -- formed a privileged group in the slave community (Frazier, 1957). As a

result of the close relationships that house servants developed with their masters, much inbreeding occurred. Many of the offspring of such unions were emancipated by their white fathers and therein lies a major contributor to the beginnings of the African American free class structure in American society.

In contrast, field hands had few intimate contacts with whites and found their most creative social expression in religion. Baptist and Methodist missionaries preached a simple doctrine of salvation which many slaves believed and which served as the cornerstone for a form of worship different from that of whites and their house servants. The field slaves also spoke a dialect which served to set them apart from the house servants (Frazier, 1957).

After the Civil War a class of African Americans emerged from the masses that was distinguished by its social awareness, economic privilege and stability, and educational experiences. The "black elite" of nineteenth century American society was composed of the most successful blacksmiths, tailors, barbers, hackmen and draymen, grocers, hotel owners, caterers, real estate dealers and contractors, teachers, educated ministers, and a few doctors and lawyers (Puckrein, 1984).

An examination of status in the free African American community can also be approached from the vantage point of the Great Migration (1915-1940). Emancipation gave the motivation to pursue opportunities that would make for a better way of life in the North. There were opportunities to become more educated, earn better wages, and to experience a different kind of life (Davis, 1923). Before the first world war and during the "great migration" (which coincided with the war) the Negro class structure was characterized by two main classes- upper and lower. Evidence of this is clearly stated in an article written by a "colored" citizen of Washington, DC who described the African American community as an hierarchical class structure consisting of several categories: The *first* class were slaves before the Civil War who bought their freedom; the *second* or middle class were freed after the Civil War; the *third* class consisted of Negroes who never had masters but were in worse economic condition than the first and second classes. Apart from the three classes of blacks mentioned previously was an *upper* class which consisted of blacks who bought their freedom before the Civil War or were always free (Bruce, 1877; Frazier, 1968). The first.

second, and third classes reflect the lower class structure that had little or no economic security. The upper class represented a group that had some economic security through steady employment, education, or other means of acquiring wealth.

It is important to note that the disparity of wealth between black and white communities makes it necessary to use different criteria for determining social status. The wealth in African American communities across the US is not and was not comparable to the wealth in the white communities. A more subjective and representational means of determining status within this group is the assignment of status based on values.

Skin color

Color has always been a stratifier in the African American community and a key factor in the determination of status along with acculturation, education, and wealth. The complexity of the issue is evident when the myriad skin shades of African Americans are considered. Euro-Americans have but one color line that separates them from African Americans though there have historically been other characteristics used to distinguish among Euro-Americans. There are many color lines within the African American race; this historically has made "color" a volatile issue, in that it was and is used to determine access to opportunities among members of the race. The lighter the skin color, the greater the opportunities. Skin color and parentage often determined access to education, wealth, or opportunities which were not available to the "common" Negro (Gatewood, 1990).

Status in the Black Community Status Factors Partly Under Personal Control

Other factors in defining status were controlled more easily by individuals than the positions that blacks held in slavery or their skin color. Social and organizational affiliations, church affiliation, education, cultural heritage, socio-economic status/occupation, ownership, and social behavior/ genteel performance were all factors in determining status.

Affiliations

Affiliations with clubs and other organizations were often considered as key factors in assigning status in the black community.

Social Organizations

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were periods in which women and men from many different races and backgrounds were involved in a great deal of "organizational activity." Forming clubs was viewed as a means of dealing with the many social issues of the day. Women were at the forefront of "club life" and formed clubs to meet needs at all class levels. There were organizations with the expressed purpose of educating the poorer masses. There were also organizations that extended membership only to those individuals who exhibited genteel behavior and a refined lifestyle (Gatewood, 1990).

One of the primary functions of African American clubs during the nineteenth century was "race uplift." Race uplift, designed to raise living standards of African Americans, took many forms. Many social organizations began educating the masses on "proper dress, appropriate manners, performance of ritual, and public behavior"(Gatewood, 1990, p.184). Literary, historical, or scientific societies devoted much attention to African American heritage and proposed to create greater awareness of the past history of the race. Church organizations focused on social issues in the community which were, in most cases, only peripherally associated with religion. Fraternal societies developed national networks which promoted common values (Gatewood, 1990). Club activities became a major medium by which the life situation of the masses would be improved.

Fraternal Organizations

One of the oldest and most respected secret societies was the fraternity of Prince Hall Freemasonry. This fraternal organization was composed of the educated and cultured black men who in many cases were multi-racial. Elitist and selective, Prince Hall Freemasonry provided such individuals with a close-knit environment and a national network that supported the values and lifestyle which they represented. Freemasonry and other secret societies were for some a perpetuation of family tradition and for others a means of enhancing social standing or improving political and economic stance (Grimshaw, 1902; Williams, 1980).

Church Affiliations

Church affiliations also distinguished between status levels in African American communities. The majority of African Americans were Methodist or Baptist. The "elite" class typically associated themselves with religious denominations such as Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and to a lesser degree Methodist Episcopal. Often spiritual growth and development had little to do with an affirmation of faith. Church affiliation was viewed as a means by which families could move up or maintain their level of status in a community. A number of congregations clearly exhibited a color consciousness that obviously excluded dark-skinned people from their congregations (Gatewood, 1988).

Education

Although skin color, social affiliations, and church affiliations were important for attaining social status in the African American community, education which represented the shaping of a cultivated, disciplined mind was even more important. The African American educator and writer W. E. B. DuBois expresses this premise as he refers to the "talented tenth". The "talented tenth" were those exceptional men and women of the race that would according to DuBois save the masses from the worst elements of their own and other races (DuBois, 1904, p. 33). Education was and continues to be a powerful qualifier of status for members of the African American community. The precept of educational attainment and the opportunities associated with it have been passed down from generation to generation and form the foundation upon which success is based in the black community.

Formal and informal education was stressed. The family and home environment were significant in continuing the tradition of literacy and education. Parents provided models of self-culture and informal education by hosting numerous club meetings in their homes in which music, literature, art, and classical music were the topics for discussion. Children had regular or daily lessons in music, art, and literature. Frequent trips to museums, art galleries, and the theater were common ways of exposing children to classical music, great books, foreign languages, and musical instruments (violin, piano, etc.). Those who could afford it traveled abroad, to large cultural centers in the US, and to resort areas where they socialized with other upper class blacks throughout the country. These activities helped to ensure the

cultivation of the best of the race. Education related to rules of etiquette was important also. The display of good manners was more than a useful stratifier; good manners were directly related to white people's perception of the race and had to be demonstrated at all times in order for assimilation into American society to occur.

The importance of a "good" education to this group was evident in the many children of the "black elite" who completed preparatory schools and went on to attend elite colleges and universities such as Howard, Fisk, Wilberforce, or predominantly white universities in the North. Selecting the right field of study was as important as being well educated. It was instrumental to success. Education, above most things, was perceived as a means by which all people could better their position in society and become truly "refined" and "cultured" (Gatewood, 1990).

Heritage

The onslaught of the great migration frustrated old aristocratic families of the African American communities. Less educated, uncultured African Americans moved in masses into communities in which "elite" blacks had spent considerable time developing a demeanor and creating conditions that would allow for easy assimilation into the dominant Euro-American culture. The aristocrats' response to the onslaught of the African American masses was to move into white neighborhoods (mostly those who were multi-racial and could pass for white) or to the periphery of the Negro communities over which they once ruled. "Old families" isolated themselves from the masses by choosing to live in neighborhoods outside Negro communities. They selected homes that were in close proximity to white neighborhoods, sometimes as close as a block away (Frazier, 1948). They took great pride in their lineage, which in most cases included white ancestry and further served to separate them from the African American masses. For some distinct reason white lineage (descent from well-to-do whites as opposed to poor whites) was associated with inheritance of such desirable characteristics as intelligence, proper decorum, and the highest moral standards. This feeling of pride in having white aristocratic connections was passed down from generation to generation and served to regulate lifestyle and social interactions. Some families of darker complexions were accepted as "elite" due primarily to their free ancestry and economic condition. They were not, however, considered as marriageable partners for

members of multi-racial families because of the difference in skin color (Frazier, 1948). In addition to lineage, cultural experiences were a distinguishing factor for the "elite". Learning proper English or other languages, reading the best literature, and acquiring all the skills that were necessary to assimilate into the white culture was a life goal for many members of elite groups (Frazier, 1948). All of these factors were seen as distinguishing characteristics that validated the evidence of "white" lineage.

Occupation and socio-economic situation

Upper class African Americans were distinguished by perceived high moral standards and superior cultural understanding. According to Frazier (1957), occupation had not been a status criterion for the masses before World War I, because only a small number of elite Negroes represented the full spectrum of occupational classes. It was common for status to be based on moral standards and cultural experiences of an individual rather than occupation. The idea of an African American professional was considered outlandish, although doctors, lawyers, and teachers began to surface at the turn of the century (DuBois, 1904). It was not until the American economy experienced a manpower shortage during World War I that African Americans were allowed increased opportunities for "blue collar" work. As varied job opportunities, white and blue collar, became available, occupation became a criterion for determining status factor in the African American community (Frazier, 1957).

Ownership

Ownership of real estate was another status-determining factor among "free Negroes" of the North and South long before the Civil War. From New York to Louisiana, "free Negroes" acquired wealth by purchasing land and real estate (buildings). Among the most prosperous were those from Louisiana who were from multi-racial backgrounds, under French rule, and plantation owners. Some of these free blacks owned plantation during the time of French rule in the US (Wesley, 1927). This group was the forerunner of the "black elite" in America. Among its members were land and real estate owners; and a number of artisans, including carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, painters, bootmakers, butchers, millwrights, wheelwrights, and bricklayers. Some worked independently and set up small businesses such as barbershops, hairdressing salons, and tailoring shops. Others started

restaurants, newspapers, drug stores, and dyeing establishments (Haynes, 1912). This group presented a startling contrast to the members of the oppressed masses.

Behavior: The Genteel Performance

A high social status implied advanced education and culture, which were closely linked to proper conduct. It was generally agreed that the lower strata were coarse and noisy and sometimes irritating, especially in public places (Gatewood, 1990; Landry, 1987; Lewis, 1981).

The behavior spelled out in etiquette manuals (Green, 1920) not only offered external evidence of culture, refinement, and character that equaled the best found among the "white elites," but also served to advance the claim of African Americans to first-class citizenship by demonstrating their capacity for assimilation into the larger society. Proper decorum was a popular topic for the black elites who grew accustomed to lecturing to the black masses. In fact the black elites viewed themselves as the models for proper behavior. "The respectable and cultured of the race," a African American resident of Denver remarked in 1908, "must set the pace for others to follow" (Gatewood, 1990, p. 186). Theirs was the responsibility to teach lower-class African Americans how to behave and how to achieve "high planes of living" (Gatewood, 1990, p. 186). In 1907 a Chicago attorney who was part of the city's colored aristocracy claimed that the primary "excuse for the existence of 'society' is that it sets a standard for good manners." (Gatewood, 1990, p. 123). Within such a society, dress also served as an important means for distinguishing between classes.

The genteel performance was defined by Gatewood (1990) in the statement below.

The genteel performance is a system of polite conduct that demands flawless self-discipline practiced with an apparently easy, natural sincere manner. In this system, which embodies standards of behavior and dress, particular attention is given to an individual's exhibition of elegant manners and good breeding. Importance is attached to proper dress that is conservative in taste and high in quality. At the same time, dress must not exhibit an inclination towards conspicuous consumption. (Gatewood, 1990, p. 142)

The cultural background, education, and social affiliations of the "black elite" demonstrated vividly the importance of the "genteel" distinction (Gatewood, 1990).

From the perspective of the old African American elite, manners at the turn of the century exhibited serious deterioration when compared to those of the previous generation. In 1911, a statement made by a Baltimore woman who for many years conducted a private school for children of the African American elite, expressed the longings of the old African American elite for the return of the social behaviors that were practiced in late nineteenth century:

I wish that youth would cultivate a more refined attitude. I sometimes think of my girlhood days when mothers would insist that their children only associate with refined people....There are some who think that a good suit of clothes ...is all one needs to enter refined company, but back of it should be a respect for all those conventions that make for respectable living. (Gatewood, 1990, p. 183)

“Elitism”

All of the aforementioned factors in varied combinations helped to define the “black elite” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A discussion on the elements of “elitism” in black society will create a better understanding of the importance of cultivating and preserving these elements in the life of the “black elitist.”

Elitism in the United States

Satirical accounts of the emergence of African American "society" were printed periodically in newspapers and journals across the nation. Some accounts focused on the obsession with lineage that most "elite" blacks exhibited. One particular account admonished African Americans who through isolationist actions ardently broadcast their narrow escape from "being born white." The account went on to state that this group put up a great facade in that they knew when and where to keep their mouths closed lest they betray their true intellect in the presence of a genuinely educated person. It was also noted that they were quite adept at tracing their ancestry back many generations and at highlighting their illustrious pedigree and white lineage. Though this account is satirical, it gives some indication of the perceptions of elite status among upper class African Americans during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Frazier, 1948).

The "elite" African American society had its beginnings in North America in the mid-17th century. Slaves and indentured servants were brought to this country, but unlike the slaves

of the ante-bellum South, they spoke formal English, were baptized as Christians, and experienced a great deal more freedom. Many of these early slaves set the terms of their employment, obtained freedom, bought farms, established families, owned slaves themselves, and even held minor public office (Puckrein, 1984).

The idea that the black community consisted of blacks who had a higher status than some whites in terms of ownership, education, etc. was an idea that was foreign to most whites during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Blacks were most commonly perceived as a group with no distinctions in wealth, prestige, education, behavior, or culture. Blacks were viewed as a race of homogeneous people, with no internal status or social hierarchy (Gatewood, 1988; Green & Smith, 1983).

Though whites ignored stratified social groups among blacks, research supports the idea that social gradations have existed in the black community from its beginnings in the United States (Meier, 1962; Mullins & Sites, 1984; Puckrein, 1984). Typically there was a large lower class, a growing middle class, and a proportionally small upper class. The small group of aspiring, upper class blacks was often referred to as the "black elite" (Frazier, 1957).

Among the black elite, there had to be some distinction in education, cultural heritage and experience, income levels, and social behavior in order to be accepted into this exclusive social group. Being educated for the elite meant having access to a particular school or type of instruction; cultural heritage referred to a "blue vein" ancestry (being light enough to see the blue veins in the arms); income level referred to secure jobs and ownership of business, home, or land; and social behavior referred to having the "right" affiliations with people, as well as social and religious organizations.

Black elitists were located in major cities throughout the United States. There were a few dissimilarities among groups but all of them enforced exclusion through the use of status criteria. A discussion of the black elite located in the Midwest provides background on how status criteria were used.

Elitism in the Midwest

Class structure in the African American communities in the Midwest at the turn of the century was similar to that found in large and small cities in the East and South. In 1900, the

District of Columbia had a greater black population than Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit combined. Although the populations of many Midwestern cities did not compare to the larger cities on the East Coast, particularly before the Great Migration (1915 - 1940), class differences did exist. No matter how large or small the town, there existed groups that would be described as "elites" (Gatewood, 1990).

Throughout the Midwest, African American elites in large and small cities shared similar characteristics, including the accusation of being color-conscious. In many cases the African American upper class consisted of families who had been educated and had enjoyed several generations of freedom. Their exclusive ranks included teachers, business professionals, entrepreneurs, porters, and artisans. According to Richard R. Wright, Jr. (1903), it was this group of blacks which possessed "the confidence of the community of whites" (p. 1042). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the greatest prestige belonged to those who showed "refinement" in their manner; these refined individuals consisted of a small group of attorneys, municipal employees, and entrepreneurs active in religious and social affairs. Educational attainment and occupation were two pertinent criteria used in determining status in the community (Gatewood, 1990).

Upper class blacks grew up with a view that education was fundamental to a successful life. This group was well educated when compared to the African American masses. A noted African American Episcopal minister, William V. Tunnell, made the following statement - "however significant family background, complexion, and church affiliation might be as stratifiers, they are both singly and collectively less important than the disciplined, cultivated mind produced by higher education" (Tunnell, 1890, p. 173). An education was the verification that one was refined and cultured and was therefore essential to entry into the highest stratum of black society.

In black communities in St. Paul and Minneapolis, there was a high degree of correlation between a light skin and social prominence. The intellectual, social, and political leadership of the communities was dominated by not more than a dozen of those assigned elite status. Periodically rumors circulated to the effect that "a blue vein society existed among the mulatto element" in the Twin Cities (Gatewood, 1990, p. 129). (Note: The use of the term "mulatto" here

is directly quoted from historical material; the contemporary use of this term is considered repugnant).

In Indianapolis, Indiana the black press often highlighted the "social exclusiveness" of the "upper ten circles" of their city. That the Indianapolis African American elite was inferior to other groups across the contrary was an issue that there were always efforts to refute. According to the Indianapolis elite, they too were "the equal of any in the United States." Repeatedly, local observers noted that the true elite in Indianapolis placed extraordinary emphasis on modes of reserve, dignified demeanor, refined culture, and high moral standards. Associated with one of two literary and cultural organizations and usually members of either the Methodist Episcopal or Presbyterian churches, Indianapolis' elite consciously drew the lines between the excluded and the included in their communities (Gatewood, 1990).

Whether Chicago possessed "real society" as did other cities in the East has always been a point for discussion. It was in Chicago that barbers were sometimes included in the exclusive groups of African Americans. It appeared that wealth and occupation counted for less in determining one's status in Chicago than background and culture (Gatewood, 1990). Whether classified as "real society" or not, Chicago has always been a center for distinguishing status levels in the African American community. This is primarily because of the numbers of the race who moved there during "the Great Migration" and partly because of the opportunities for African Americans to accumulate wealth comparable to members of the white upper classes.

Social Status Within Coal Mining Communities 1901 - 1923

According to historian E. P. Thompson, status differences within a group occur "when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interest are different from and usually opposed to theirs" (Thompson, 1963, p. 11).

One popular view of coal mining towns is that the structure of the "company town" prohibited socioeconomic competition between the classes. Status distinctions were not determined by ethnicity or race but by occupation or job assignment within coal mining communities. The company was viewed as the all-powerful authority that imposed controls and

standardized the economic policies that resulted in the oppressive conditions that miners and their families experienced (Corbin, 1981; Schwieder, 1983). This brings into question whether social status existed among residents of coal mining communities. The restrictive nature of "company" operations implies that the constraints placed on miners and their families prohibited the development of a social hierarchy (Corbin, 1981). The very nature of coal mining suggests that there was no time for such distinctions to evolve. Coal mining towns were established for short periods of time and had transient workers (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984; Lewis, 1987; Schwieder, et al., 1987). Could a social hierarchy develop under such conditions?

There is evidence that a social hierarchy did exist between management and the working class in coal mining communities. This is exhibited in E. P. Thompson's account of "theatrical style" in coal mining communities. Theatrical style was the conspicuous display of the operator's house by location and design, conspicuous dress to show rank and station, and "social lubricant gestures" designed to "make the mechanisms of power and exploitation evolve more sweetly" (Thompson, 1974, p. 102). The social gestures included prizes for care of homes and gardens, turkeys for families at Christmas, and parties for war veterans (Corbin, 1981).

Social hierarchy within the coal mining community was never so evident as in the distinction in the housing and dress of company men versus miners. E. P. Thompson discussed "theater" in coal mining communities in terms of housing and dress (Thompson, 1963).

Contrary to the situation in Buxton, most coal mining companies offered "company men" housing that was different in size, outer appearance, location, and amenities. The homes of "company men" were of much higher quality than homes provided for miners. The exteriors of these houses were made of stone or other high quality and durable materials rather than boards used to construct most company houses. Most houses designed and built for company men were equipped with electricity, indoor plumbing, and steam heat (Corbin, 1981; Thompson, 1974). Also, as mentioned previously, the social hierarchy of the community was represented in the location of company men's and miners' houses.

In terms of dress, one coal operator used clothing to project a specific image as he moved from town to town in his business travels. In the town where he worked he wore old clothing; in other commercial towns he wore decent clothes; and in his company town he wore his best

clothes (Corbin, 1981). Theater was further stressed by the manner in which coal miner's wives dressed. In an attempt to create better relations between coal miners and company men, one coal operator suggested that the wives of company men should dress more modestly so as not to create jealousy among the coal miner's wives. Keely states, "Richly dressed women parading through a mining camp have about the same effect as a bird of gorgeous plumage feeding among the sparrows - they always want to peck at it" (p. 102). He also suggested company wives' involvement in the lives of coal miners, particularly participation in church and social activities to aid in creating a more cordial living environment and better social conditions for miners and their families (Keely, 1917, p. 591).

Social class has been very well delineated in most company towns. Workers were either miners or company men. This factor implied that there was a hierarchical class structure in coal mining communities. Discrimination of the classes was based upon occupation rather than race. This is exhibited in the company amenities provided for the company men (high quality company houses with electricity and other amenities, prime location for homes).

Most studies on social structure in coal mining communities would support the fact that these towns inhibited socioeconomic competition and mobility by means of standardized living and work conditions. Unlike Buxton, coal mining towns across the U. S. were characterized by strict class lines based on race, ethnicity, and most of all, occupation. The coal operators were viewed as the oppressors not only of African Americans but of all coal miners, regardless of ethnic background (Corbin, 1981; Rutland, 1956). Coal miners developed a sense of group cohesion which influenced interracial harmony in the communities. There was a realistic awareness of the necessity to work together and unionize in order to counteract the coal company's objectionable policies (Corbin, 1981; Wright, 1908). Interestingly, the social organization of Buxton did not develop such strict class lines.

In the company town, blacks were not in competition with white miners for jobs and their hiring had no impact on opportunities for other whites. The demand for miners was greater than supply until 1920. The system of payment that the company used did not allow for discrimination, in that workers were paid based on the amount of coal mined rather than the color of the skin. Miners competed with themselves for higher wages primarily based on the tons of

coal mined on a daily basis. Energy and stamina were the deciding factors in determining the amount of money received every two weeks or at the end of the month (Laing, 1963).

Another reason for the racial harmony experienced by residents in coal mining towns was the pressure imposed by coal mining companies when groups antagonized black migrants. It was not unusual for company officials to fire whites who were up in arms over black workers. In contrast, blacks who migrated to northern cities were often hired into positions that Native Americans (American Indians) or immigrants refused. These jobs, of course, were the most poorly paid and demeaning. When blacks challenged whites for positions there was little hope of obtaining equal consideration because of the prevalent fear that black hires decreased white opportunity (Frankel, 1930; Johnson, 1924; Spero & Harris, 1974).

In summary, the factors that contributed to racial harmony in coal mining towns were the background and life experiences of the migrant, the abundance of work available in coal mining towns, and the company pay structure.

Institutions and leadership in coal mining communities

There is some confusion regarding where the leadership in coal mining communities came from: the community people, the company, or community institutions. It would be difficult to make a statement regarding leadership that encompasses all camps, but there is evidence that many coal camp residents looked to community institutions (YMCA, schools, fraternal orders) and the people in leadership roles in those institutions to provide broader community leadership. In Buxton, leadership was provided by a trusted mine operator, Ben Buxton, plus established community businessmen and leaders in the church and school systems. Recreational activities (band, athletic teams) also played a role in providing community direction and promotion of excellence. The individuals who took the lead in these areas were viewed as community leaders. This method of assignment of leadership may have been uncommon in most coal mining communities, particularly if there was a low level of recreational, educational, organizational, and entrepreneurial activities.

The combination of low levels of activities with an unwillingness to trust community professionals significantly decreased the potential for leadership evolving in coal mining towns. Professionals were regarded as deceptive and in the employ of company operators:

this reduced the trust level of many people. The level of trust between professionals (doctors, lawyers, businessmen, teachers, preachers) and coal miners was very low. This was related to the control of salaries by company operators. The media, also, in many cases favored and supported mine operators. This is evident in the number of reports on the "good life" in coal mining towns. Miners tended to look to their own ranks for outstanding men, who thus had prestige and distinction. The criteria for distinction in these cases was efficient and timely response to daily situations encountered in the mines and leadership in the union (Laing, 1963; Shrumm, 1913; Spero & Harris, 1974). There were institutions in coal mining towns that served as cultivating ground for community leaders - YMCA, fraternal organizations, churches, schools, and the family.

YMCA

The history of the YMCA in coal mining communities provides an interesting picture of institutional impact on the community through leadership, recreation, and education. YMCAs sprang up in coal mining camps across the country for several reasons. The coal operators believed that constructive use of leisure time was essential to maintaining peace and order in the community. The industrial secretary of the YMCA in West Virginia, Ira Shaw, was a strong advocate of community involvement in the YMCA. He suggested that the YMCA activities would reduce alcohol consumption and labor activities. The "Y" met recreational as well as educational needs of miners and their families and it also helped organize the activities and social groups needed to develop a higher standard of living. With a higher standard of living, miners would become more competitive with neighbors for material goods. Shaw proposed that if such a community could evolve then anarchy could not thrive. It was not uncommon for industries in towns across the United States to use YMCAs as a means of social control. The "Ys" cashed checks of employees and diverted this traffic from saloons. These objectives fit into the general purposes of the YMCA, which was to improve the condition of man through his work, living environment, and leisure activities; this resulted in a more efficient and productive worker and a more satisfying employer-employee relationship (Hopkins, 1951). The industrial secretary of the YMCA, Charles Townson, wrote, "The Association creates an atmosphere of friendliness and

confidence which helps to prevent misunderstandings and to make possible the adjustment of differences when they arise" (Townson, 1922, p. 134).

Fraternal Organizations

The significance of social life and social organizations is examined minimally in the research on coal mining towns. The importance of such activities is exhibited by the number of miners belonging to fraternal lodges. In West Virginia alone, 10,000 African Americans belonged to fraternal organizations in 1915. By 1922 that number had increased to approximately 33,000. It was typical for a miner in West Virginia to own membership in a fraternal order (Bailey, 1972; Spero & Harris, 1974).

The reasons miners joined fraternal organizations were twofold. They wanted to be a part of an organization that promoted brotherhood and unity. They also sought the insurance and death benefits offered through fraternal organizations. It was common for the coal company to support social activities in the community, as a way of calming community people and building cooperation in the community. The organization of fraternal orders in coal mining towns was viewed as means to focus the attentions of miners and their families on wholesome things (Corbin, 1981). Some of the same values promoted in fraternal lodges were also promoted in the union, namely, camaraderie and unity. The necessity of coming together in strength to accomplish a goal and support fellow members was a primary responsibility in both organizations (Mullins & Sites, 1984).

Churches

The church has long been a center of religious, educational, and social activities in the African American community. It has been used for recreation, amusement, and entertainment in the community (DuBois, 1899a). This fact did not change in coal mining communities. This importance in the community is clearly stated in an excerpt on the condition of the church in a small town in Virginia. Though the piece is in reference to a particular community, it is applicable to the purposes and functions of many African American churches of the time. The excerpt basically states the following points. The churches in black communities did much more than meet religious needs of members. Church was in many respects the social center of the community and church buildings served

as places for various organizations to meet. They served as places for entertainment, lectures, and other amusements to occur; and also places where monies, contributed for special causes, were collected and distributed. This melding of social, recreational, educational, and religious activity resulted in a freedom in religious expressions. For example, the programs associated with religious activities often appeared more social and entertaining than religious. A "camp meeting" often turned into a picnic where sports activities, music (some religious), speeches, and eating were the focus. The Sunday school conventions, convocations and the like were often associated with reunions in which denominational business and issues were discussed but "catching up" with one another was also important. And on a weekly basis, Sunday school and church served as a forum for visiting with friends and family (DuBois, 1897).

It is logical that the black church would meet the various needs of the community. It was the one institution in which blacks were allowed autonomy. The church as an institution was a means through which blacks could operate independently and with the best interests of the race at heart. It served as a forum through which social, intellectual, economic, and religious activism and influence became widespread. Even the character of blacks was influenced in the repeated admonitions from the church pulpits to relinquish drunkenness, gambling, and other antisocial behavior and become kindly, charitable, and morally upstanding citizens (DuBois, 1897).

There are some accounts that the popular religious culture was stymied by coal company officials. In West Virginia, for example, coal companies hired preachers and built churches for miners and their families. The Consolidation Coal Company in Buxton also built churches for the local congregations. The relationship between the company and preachers created an indebtedness on the parts of ministers to the company instead of to the members of their congregations. Those preachers who were not "bought" by the company, and who encouraged union participation, lost their jobs and were barred from preaching in company towns. If a preacher cooperated with the company, he was given a job as informant and labor agent (job recruiters) at the risk of losing the respect of other blacks in coal mining towns (Davis, 1924). A black miner in southern West

Virginia stated the following:

The situation was so bad in some places that one miner reported:

We have some Negro preachers in the district who are nothing more than stool pigeons for the coal operators, and instead of preaching of the Gospel of the Son of God, they preach the doctrine of union hatred and prejudice, but I thank God the tide is fast changing and we are beginning to see the light for ourselves and realize the fact that they are only selling us out to the bosses for a mere mess of the porrage (sic) (Corbin, 1981, p. 69).

Schools

Coal mining operators were usually supportive of setting up educational systems in coal mining towns. An educated miner was believed to cause fewer problems in the mines than an uneducated miner. The opportunity to go to school was also a drawing card for blacks in the south who had not had access to an education. For many blacks, acquiring an education was the only means of improving life opportunities.

Segregated schools existed in coal mining towns across the United States before the turn of the century. As coal mining towns increased, coal mining officials exercised their influence over legislators to change the laws that dictated segregation. Illiteracy was viewed as a deterrent to "productivity" and company profits. If workers could not read they had more accidents. Company efforts were successful in encouraging legislation that had tremendous impact on the educational level of miners and their families.

The move away from color as an issue and the focus on criteria, such as qualification, is again exhibited in the hiring of teachers for the schools in coal mining camps and in teachers' salaries, which were typically higher for blacks than for whites. Some coal companies hired the teachers and supplemented their income to encourage them to stay and teach in coal mining towns. Such practices encouraged the best of black teachers to apply for teaching positions in coal fields (West Virginia Supervisor of Free Schools, 1906). Many companies increased supplemental funds for facilities, books, and supplies. To attract quality teachers, companies paid salaries that were sometimes twice as much as the salaries paid outside coal mining communities. For a really excellent superintendent or teacher, quality

housing was provided with all the amenities (electricity, steam heat, indoor plumbing). "Teacherages" were built to provide decent living quarters for teachers - rent free. To attract quality teachers to coal mining towns, coal mining operators paid above the average pay scale (Logan District Mines, 1921; Rosenheim, 1924).

The presence of schools and teachers was also useful in that it gave illiterate coal miners an opportunity to learn to read and write. Teachers volunteered their time after work hours to teach those adults who wanted to learn (Ambler, 1951; West Virginia Superintendent of Free Schools, 1916). Labor agents used this fact to sell blacks on moving to work in the mines. For example, West Virginia was promoted as the state that took responsibility for education all of its people, regardless of race. The fact that blacks perceived education as a means to improve their economic conditions helped company recruitment efforts (Ambler, 1951).

Coal companies across the country made considerable financial investments in education. They provided buildings, supplies, and support to maintain the schools. Coal mining companies very generously provided schools for elementary education, but high schools were rarely found in coal mining towns. In contrast to this trend, the Consolidation Coal Company in Buxton, Iowa built a high school for the children of its employees (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984; Schwieder, et al., 1987).

Teachers, like preachers, were not allowed to discuss union activities in their work, for fear of losing their jobs. Coal operators had direct influence on the board that was responsible for hiring and firing teachers (Stephenson, 1898). It was Stephenson's contention that preachers and teachers could not have been leaders in coal mining communities due to their disconnectedness from the economic stability of the community (Stephenson, 1898). For teachers, security depended upon the financial support of the coal companies, in many cases, and for preachers their economic security was dependent upon support from congregation members and religious organizations. Though they were considered leaders in other communities, they clearly did not hold leadership status in the majority of coal mining communities (Stephenson, 1898).

Family

The northern migration of the 1910s is at times credited with severing familial ties and breaking down the institution of the family. In cases where entire families migrated, it was easier for women than for men to find work. Though the jobs were menial, the woman took the role as the primary "breadwinner" in the family. This resulted in role reversal, according to societal values at the time, and an atypical living arrangement in which males took on the role of the "housemate". Societal values dictated that the man should be the primary money earner in the family. The role reversal and shift in responsibilities created unstable conditions in many families (Drake & Cayton, 1945; Frazier, 1968).

The southern blacks' migration to coal towns, in contrast, improved family stability. Job opportunities were based on gender rather than race. Jobs were available to those who wanted to work; this placed men in positions to be primary "breadwinners" in their families. Some women had small home businesses (selling eggs and produce, taking in boarders, etc.) that supplemented family income, but the coal mining wage was the mainstay.

Company practices also encouraged a sound family structure. Company houses, though not always in the best condition, were made available to families (Schwieder, 1983). (For photographs of company houses see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 3, Figure 3 and p. 119, Figure 104). According to company policy, only men could work in the mines. Married men represented the most stable work force for the company, so when layoff times came around, the single men were the first to be released. Married miners did prove to be harder workers because they had to support and feed a family. These preferential practices supported family stability among miners (Collins, 1909, 1916).

Married men also proved to be good union men. The vested interest they had in the coal mines and their homes probably contributed to their strong commitment to the union. When strikes occurred, married men usually persevered until it was over, while single men typically migrated to other coal towns to find work (Corbin, 1981). All of these factors encouraged men to take leadership roles in their families, though women were charged with the daily tasks of maintaining a household and raising children.

Status In Iowa

John L. Thompson, the editor of the *Iowa State Bystander* during the years covered by my study, provides some insights into criteria used for assigning status in the black community in Iowa. The *Iowa State Bystander* was a newspaper that was targeted for the black population of Iowa and surrounding regions. John L. Thompson traveled the state of Iowa, visiting black communities and reporting on economic and social happenings, accomplishments of black Iowans, and the general well-being of the communities and the citizens who lived in them. He believed that the "uplift" of the race was dependent upon highlighting the accomplishments of blacks and communicating those accomplishments to the masses. Several key factors that surfaced as determinants of status in black communities visited by Thompson in his travels across Iowa were education; economic security through occupation; ownership of business, land, or farms, and leadership in different religious, social, political, recreational and cultural activities in the community (LaBrie, 1974; Lufkin, 1980). A few excerpts from the Iowa Bystander serve as excellent profiles of high status among black Iowans, particularly as seen by John L. Thompson.

Dr. J. Dulin - Perhaps no Negro in the city has a more unique history....He served his country after the war of the rebellion after which he took up the study of medicine and completed a regular course in St. Louis, Missouri, but until recently has divided his time between preaching the gospel and practicing medicine. He came to the state of Iowa in 1881, and to the city of Des Moines about twenty-two years ago and was formerly pastor of the East Side Baptist and Moderator of the Iowa Baptist Association. But his fame as a healer of disease (spread) so rapidly and his practice grew so extensive that he was compelled give up active pastoral work, and at present devotes his entire time to his practice which is almost entirely among those of the caucasian race. During his residence in Des Moines he has accumulated property to the value of over \$6000 including a lovely residence and sanitarium at 1619 E. Walnut. He has been a mason for more than fifty years: has a carriage and driver, and is a credit to his race.(Thompson, 1907, May 24, p.1).

One could not write a complete history of Des Moines colored people and omit the name of R. N. Hyde, one of the best known and most successful businessmen of our city. He was the patentee of the world famous soap bearing the label of H and H. He also patented the electric fan and carpet duster and is now sole owner....lovely and interesting family, Miss Gertrude a graduate from a business college and Brannon a student at West Side High School; Mr. Hyde is a shrewd politician, delegate to all

conventions. He has lately entered into real estate, owning fifteen or more houses. He is a true race man and liked by all classes. (Thompson, 1907, May 24, p.5)

Based on Thompson's columns, the religious arena was an important factor in determining status in Iowa communities. The size of the congregation, the background and educational experience of the pastor, and the length of time a church had been established all contributed to the status it was given in the community. Status of residents in the community often influenced the status of the church with which they affiliated. Conversely, admired churches sometimes helped the status of those attending.

Occupation (job title, status of job) and ownership (home, farm, or business) were two factors that were emphasized also by Thompson and promoted as important factors for exhibiting success. Thompson praised those individuals who had acquired farms and livestock in some cases; he listed the number of head of livestock and bushels of corn raised. Although John L. Thompson visited many communities throughout the state of Iowa, he highlighted the activities of the black residents of Buxton many times, including coverage of the city in a Special Edition of *The Iowa State Bystander* (September, 1903).

Social status in Buxton

Based on the previous review of literature, I propose that the following factors will surface as determinants of social status in the Buxton community - religious affiliation, social affiliations and activities, educational background, occupation, and ownership. These determinants were very similar to those that determined status in other black communities across the United States.

Religious affiliations

Among the social centers of Buxton were the African American churches. There were at least eight churches in Buxton when it was at the height of productivity: three African Methodist Episcopal churches, three Baptist churches, a Congregational Church, and a Church of God. Many Buxton residents attended churches and participated in church activities. The church played an important spiritual and social role for people of the community. It was through the church that many cultural and uplift activities were organized (Schwieder et al. 1987).

Social affiliations and activities

The 1900s were a period in which there was much activity associated with organizing. Everyone was organizing - women, men, African Americans, working men - for personal, political, social, and economic interests. It was considered necessary to become involved in the club movement, which for blacks included many activities that were designed to "uplift" the race. It was during this period that many of the literary, musical, historical, and political organizations were established (Schwieder et al. 1987).

Fraternal organizations flourished during the early 1900s also and developed a network of blacks that promoted values and provided experiences that created unity and self improvement. Fraternal organizations were very active in the Buxton community as were the literary, musical, historical, and political organizations mentioned previously. The Knights of Pythias, the Odd Fellows, the Masons, and Eastern Star were all secret orders that preached a common focus for improvement in the race. The cultural organizations promoted choral music, choirs (YMCA boys' choir), bands (the Cornet Band and the Buxton Band), and orchestras (the McDowell Orchestra and the M. C. Orchestra) for different entertainments and for the exposure of Buxton residents to excellent musical performances. Parades with bands were a common sight in festive activities in the community. Band concerts in the town park were frequent and well attended by Buxton residents (Rutland, 1956; Schwieder et al. 1987).

The YMCA was another primary center of social activities in the Buxton community. (For a photograph of the Buxton YMCA see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 78, Figure 58). Buxton had one of the best supported YMCAs in the nation during the early 1900s and it had a special program for colored boys. Buxton residents participated in and organized sports and competitive groups on a consistent basis. Activities included baseball, football, basketball, tennis, swimming, handball, bowling, roller skating, and horse racing. The YMCA was also viewed as a "community center" in which lodge meetings were held, plays were performed, and presentations by different speakers were heard. The YMCA consumed a considerable amount of the leisure time of Buxton residents, which was pleasing to them and also satisfied the Consolidation Coal Company.

Educational background

Educational preparation was consistently emphasized as a necessity for a successful life. The emphasis was reinforced by the Consolidation Coal Company in the support it gave to providing facilities in which elementary and high school educational programs could be administered. Education was emphasized through support and respect given to teachers and school administrators by parents and in the notability assigned those who through education had attained professional positions in the world as lawyers, doctors, and teachers.

Ownership

What we own often dictates the level of status attained in a community. Ownership in the black community has historically been a determinant of social status. Ownership will be examined to determine if it was a determinant of social status in the Buxton community.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

The primary focus of this research was to identify and describe criteria that determined status in a coal mining community - Buxton, Iowa; and to compare and contrast the criteria with other black communities that existed in the 1900s. Clothing and appearance and its use and as a factor in determining status was also examined.

Overview

The historical evidence and literature examined in the preceding and following chapters provide information about the income, occupations, lifestyles, and dress of residents of a predominantly black coal mining community in southeast Iowa. All of these factors affected the level of status assigned to individuals in the black community.

This research is based on oral histories. I reviewed oral histories accumulated from interviews conducted in 1980-81 by the faculty in the History, Family Environment, and Anthropology departments at Iowa State University (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984; Schwieder et al. 1987). I then extracted information related to status criteria in the Buxton coal mining community. The team of researchers from Iowa State interviewed 75 former residents of Buxton.

I personally conducted 10 additional interviews with former residents of Buxton in 1994. Data from these interviews were reviewed and examined to identify status-related criteria from an economic, social, and cultural perspective. Data from seven of those interviews were used in the current research. Data from the remaining three informants were not relevant to the research questions.

Historical evidence was also gathered from the contents of the *Iowa State Bystander*. The Iowa State Bystander was a newspaper that was marketed to the black readership of Iowa. The newspaper covered a broad spectrum, including local, regional, national, and world news. Iowan communities with notable black populations were assigned a column in which the social, cultural, and political news of the various towns was reported. I will now examine historical research and the types of data gathering that are an integral part of oral histories and the current research.

Historical Research

At the foundation of this study of social status and community structure in coal mining towns is oral history. A brief description of the research principles used to develop this study of oral history follows.

It is important to examine the types of historical evidence that are available for historical analysis to better understand its place in the research paradigm. There are five types of historical evidence that go into analysis of historical events.

Transactional records are symbolic representatives of particular actions or events of the past. Transactional records do not involve interpretation and are therefore distinguished from other forms of evidence. Census data will be used to provide evidence of income, occupations, family structure, etc. in the Buxton community. Clothing styles from the 1900s collected from contemporary magazines and catalogs (*The Delineator*, *Vogue*, *Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog*) will also be used in the interpretation of the data (Shafer, 1980). It is important to note that there are biased or fallacious data on census records.

Selective records are descriptions of events of a given time. A key factor in selective evidence is that the events are described at the time that they occur and there is an interpretive process in the evaluation of the evidence. Selective records are valuable in that they were written at the time an event occurred; however, they are not as substantial as transactional records because of the interpretive factor. The research on Buxton will include newspaper accounts of events and still photographs which are categorized as selective records. Again, it is important to note that there are some biases and false information in newspapers and other selective records.

Recollections are accounts of events soon after they occur or later. These would include accounts of people who were eye witnesses. They are distinguished from selective records in that they were not recorded when the event occurred. The evidentiary value of recollections is not on the same level as transactional and selective records for several reasons; recollections involve the differences in the experiences, background, and perspective of the person reporting the events; the purposes of the informant in providing the information; and the tendency of informants to include biases when reporting information

obtained from other sources. All of these factors impact the value of the evidence reported (Shafer, 1980).

Reflections, like recollections, involve memories of the past but also mirror an introspective and unpretentious response to events of the past. The past is examined in terms of the impact it has had on the present. Such responses are emotion-laden and biased and usually expressed with little thought to the accuracy of the evidence. In oral history interviews there are elements of recollections and reflections, making distinctions between the two very important. Both reflections and recollections should be viewed as clues to the past, not evidence of the realities of the past. Reflections give insights into what people thought about the past and help the historians to better understand the meanings of past events (Shafer, 1980).

Synthesis refers to the evaluation and interpretation of the information the historian has collected about a past event. It is during this phase that the historian attempts to bring meaning to the evidence that has been collected. Synthesis involves examining the evidence of the past (whether from informants, still photos, advertisements) and assigning meaning. Analysis is much more than the collection, retrieval, description, and interpretation of data. Comparing data, weighing insights in terms of the level of evidence they were gleaned from, developing theoretical structures, and forming and testing hypotheses based on the evidence are all a part of the rigorous process of historical research. It represents a stern and systematic examination of all evidence regardless of its realistic or abstract dimensions (Shafer, 1980).

1994 Interviews

The first phase of the research involved locating potential interviewees for the study. Dorothy Schwieder, professor in the Department of History and a researcher on the 1980-81 project conducted at Iowa State University, was contacted for ideas on how to solicit cooperation from individuals who were former residents of the Buxton community. She suggested that I contact the Buxton Club to begin my efforts. The Buxton Club is a group of former residents and descendants of former residents of the coal mining town; it meets periodically to preserve the history of the community. The officers for the Buxton Club in

Des Moines, Iowa were contacted to set up a meeting to present my research idea. The meeting included general introductions, a presentation of the research that was being proposed, and a time for questions and answers. The club voted to support my efforts and pledged their full participation.

I requested a list of names of club participants to telephone to set up interviews. Informants were selected based upon their accessibility to Ames, willingness to cooperate in the study, and ability to recall what life was like in Buxton. All of the informants were members of the Buxton Club and volunteered to be part of the study. Ten prospective interviewees consented to be interviewed about their life in Buxton. Interviewees included four males and six females. Three black males and one white male were interviewed. Five black females and one white female were interviewed. The interviews generally proceeded as follows: The interviewer completed paperwork (consent forms and confidentiality information), completed a tape recorded interview, requested to see photos or other artifacts associated with or purchased while living in Buxton, took questions and answered them, and explained what would happen with the information obtained in the interviews (See Appendix D- Interview Schedule). The tape recorded interviews lasted an average of two and one-half to three hours.

The interview schedule was divided into four segments. In the first segment of the interview, each person was given general information about the format of the interview. The second segment of the interview was designed to gather demographic information about each interviewee. The third segment of the interview focused on gathering information related to acquiring clothing. The final segment of the interview dealt with gathering information from interviewees regarding social structure in the Buxton community. After interviews were completed they were transcribed and then entered in a database - Fox Pro - for sorting and analysis (Fox Pro, Microsoft Corporation, 1993)

1980-81 Interviews

The 1980-81 interviews provided a valuable source of information related to the social, economic, and cultural life of Buxton residents. The 1980-81 research team at Iowa State University consisted of Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hraba, and Elmer Schwieder from

the departments of History, Family Environment, and Anthropology at Iowa State University (Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984; Schwieder et al., 1987). I read the transcripts of the interviews that were completed in 1980-81 and examined them for data that would have implications for assigning social status in the community. As the interviews were read, information was categorized and entered into the Fox Pro data base for sorting and analysis. Seventy-five interview transcripts from the 1980-81 interviews (Schwieder et al., 1987) provided pertinent information regarding income, social and organizational activities, leadership activities, education, cultural heritage, ownership, and clothing and appearance. I used content analysis to gather information related to the criteria that was used to assign status in the Buxton community.

The Iowa State Bystander

As mentioned above, *The Iowa State Bystander* (established 1894), was a weekly newspaper targeted for the black population of Iowa. It was distributed throughout Iowa and the midwest. I examined all issues from 1894 to 1923 to glean any information related to Buxton and status criteria used to assign status in black communities. I examined news reports focused on communities in the state of Iowa and the region. Particular attention was given to a weekly column on activities occurring in black communities across the state and to a column by the editor which highlighted black communities across Iowa. Approximately five to ten communities were included in each issue of *The Iowa State Bystander*. Data collected from the paper were entered into the Fox Pro database and sorted and analyzed for pertinent information.

The Photographic Collection

One of the fascinating components of this study was the photos collected from former residents of Buxton. The photo collection provided pictorial evidence of the clothing and appearance of the people who participated in the interviews and their relatives who lived in the Buxton community. The leaders of the 1980 research project collected photographs from former Buxton residents that showed them in clothing for social activities, regalia for secret societies, and everyday dress. I had access to 81 of the photographs collected for the 1980 - 81 research project by Gradwohl & Osborn and Schwieder et al. The types of clothing worn

by Buxton residents were compared to the clothing illustrations in such popular publications as *The Delineator*, *Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, *The Haberdasher*, and clothing establishments that advertised in the *Iowa State Bystander*. The establishments that paid for advertising in *The Iowa State Bystander* were not, for the most part, Buxton businesses. Buxton businesses did, however, advertise in the *Buxton Gazette* (July 2, 1908) as reflected in a spring fashion advertisement for E. G. Lowe. (For an illustration see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 167, Figure 153). In order to establish approximate dates of photos and to assess fashionability, clothing worn in the photos were compared to the clothing advertised in the previously mentioned magazines and catalogs. *The Delineator*, *Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, and *The Haberdasher* were used primarily as resources because they advertised affordable clothing for the working class, unlike magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*.

For females, photographs were dated based on similarity in hairstyles, collars, sleeve style, bodice style, necklines, waistline treatment, length of dress or skirt, type of shoes worn and type of jewelry and accessories worn. For males, photographs were dated based on haircut, hat style, style of shirt collar, necktie treatment, jacket lapel width and style, jacket style, pant style and shoe styles. The ability of a society to purchase or manufacture the most recent fashion provides some indication of the socio-economic statuses evident in the community. Variety in dress sometimes reflects socioeconomic status as well as the level of social and cultural activity that occurs in a community. Levels of status may be reflected in the variety of dress owned by people of the community.

I made a concentrated effort to include examples of the following photos in the analysis of the photographic data: Photos of the informants who participated in the 1994 interviews and their family members; photos of the most notable citizens of the Buxton community and their family members (selections based on the number of references made in the interviews and published literature); photos of children ; photos of individuals in everyday (unposed) scenes; and photos of people who participated in club activities. A primary objective was to select photographs for the analysis that reflected a variety of people, occasions, and settings. Gathering information from photographs that reflect a variety of

people, occasions, and settings provided some indication of the significance of clothing and appearance in the Buxton community.

The photographs in Appendix B are arranged in the following order. The first three photographs are group of adults and children in natural settings. Figures 4 and 5 are photos of people who belonged to secret societies in Buxton. Figures 4 through 9 are picture of some of the most respected citizens of the community, mostly female and dressed in fashionable attire. Figures 10 through 16 are members of the Jones and Wilson families, one of Buxton's most outstanding families. Figures 17 and 18 include members of the Neal family and Figures 19 through 21 include members of the Carter family. The photographs were undated and assigned on the basis of the clothing styles.

Procedure

The central focus of this study was to examine the criteria that determined status in the Consolidation Coal Mining town in Buxton, Iowa. During the spring and summer of 1993, I collected data by interviewing ten former residents of Buxton. The data collection was designed to obtain information that described the criteria which determined status for blacks in Buxton. The interview questionnaire consisted of 36 questions designed to gather information regarding the thesis questions and objectives. The interview questions were designed to collect data in several different areas including educational background, leadership and involvement in the community, and methods of acquiring clothing.

Twenty-four of the 75 interviews conducted in 1980-81 interviews were selected for the study. Selections were made based on the clear identification of the informant as a black; the significance of the information he or she provided was considered also. Significance was determined by an informant's ability to provide information related to the status criteria used by former residents of the Buxton community.

All of the data that were collected and categorized from the interviews were analyzed to determine if there was information related to status criteria. The information was then sorted into blocks of information related to status criteria. Status criteria were defined as those factors that were used by informants to assign status to the residents of the Buxton community. For example, ownership was a criterion that was used by informants to

determine the status of residents. Other status definers included educational level and leadership roles in the community. The extracted information was coded and categorized by status criteria (education, ownership) and based on context. For example, I may have coded a block of information under the “education” status criterion and then specifically related it to “teachers” which provided information on the context in which it was shared.

Coding was also done by a second researcher with an 80 percent reliability rating. The second researcher coded the interview information. The second coder was provided with a list of categories that pertinent information could fall into (eg. education, acquiring clothing). He in turn coded each piece of information and compared his results with the first coder. After completing the coding and negotiating responses, the two researchers achieved 100 percent reliability rate. The information was then recorded, and entered into a FoxPro database. The results gave approximately 2200 pieces of data to be analyzed and interpreted.

Photographic information was dated independent of the documented information and may be different from some of the documented cases. This procedure was used to ensure that the dates assigned to photographs by interviewee and researchers were accurate.

Evidence was analyzed, synthesized, and reported in the Findings and Conclusions sections of this dissertation.

Limitations

There are specific limitations in this research study that could impact the findings and conclusions of the study. The limitations include the small size of the interview sample. Ten interviews were conducted with former Buxton residents. The limited sample size will limit the generalization of the data.

A second limitation to the study is the length of time that had lapsed between reporting their experience and actually living in the Buxton community. Interview information given by respondents was sometimes reduced to reflection rather than recall, as a result. Obviously it would be more valuable to the research for the informant to be able to recall and record at the same time it is occurring the events, experience, and lifestyle associated with living in the Buxton community.

One of the most significant merits of the 1994 interviews was my ability to establish rapport with the informants almost immediately. Each informant was very comfortable in sharing experiences, thoughts, and feelings about his or her life in Buxton. As a result, the information from the interviews provided “rich” information about the residents and their life experiences in Buxton.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

Before I begin my discussion on findings it is necessary to look at the research questions as stated in the research proposal. The research was divided into two general areas - criteria for distinctions among social statuses and concepts of "the genteel performance." I examined the criteria for distinctions among social statuses in predominantly black coal mining communities and tried to determine if clothing played a part in that distinction. This was accomplished by using secondary sources such as books and journal articles. The "genteel performance" concept was explored by assessing standards of behavior as shared by informants and reported in the *Iowa State Bystander*.

The objectives were stated as:

1. To examine social structure in a predominantly black, industry-based community.
2. To determine the criteria used in a black community at the turn of the twentieth century to establish levels of status.
3. To investigate whether standards of appearance were used in making status distinctions in a black coal mining community.

After careful study of the data from the interviews conducted in 1980-81 and 1994 along with the interpretation of data collected from the *Iowa State Bystander* from 1900 through 1923, I identified the following status criteria. *Acquiring wealth* is the first criterion that will be discussed. In the 1980-81 interviews the wealth was reported through ownership of real estate, automobiles, livestock, occupations, and homes and furnishings. The 1994 interviewees acquired wealth through creating financial security through work or business ownership. In *The Iowa State Bystander* those who had *acquired wealth* were owners of real estate, automobiles, livestock, and occupations. The second status criterion that will be discussed is education. Education was highly valued in the interviews that were conducted in 1980-81 and 1994, and in *The Iowa State Bystander*. The third status criterion that will be discussed is *social affiliation and club life*. The YMCA, fraternal orders and social clubs were important organizations in the Buxton community. Many community leaders were participants in these organizations. The fourth status criteria that will be discussed is *community leadership*.

Acquiring Wealth - Ownership

Long before the Civil War “free Negroes” worked to acquire wealth through the purchase of real estate and land. Despite opposition, free Negroes were able to acquire land primarily in the northern states. Another means by which free Negroes acquired wealth was through “occupation.” Some were fortunate enough to engage in occupations that proved to be profitable and beneficial to their financial status. Through their efforts to save and be thrifty and through wise investments “free Negroes” acquired approximately \$50,000,000 in personal wealth and real estate before the Civil War (Harris, 1936).

After the Emancipation the freed slaves attempted to acquire wealth in the same manner as the slaves freed prior to the Civil War. The majority of blacks who lived in the South made their living from the land, but few had been able to purchase their farms. The majority were tenants, living a life of poverty with no hopes of ever owning the land for which they worked so diligently.

As blacks migrated north during the “Great Migration”(1915-1940) and moved into white collar occupations and industry, there were some increases in opportunities to acquire wealth through work. It was out of the Fourth Atlanta University Conferences in 1898 on “The Negro in Business: Atlanta University study no. 4” that the idea surfaced of starting black owned businesses in the black community and hiring blacks to support those ventures (DuBois, 1899b).

Business enterprise was promoted as the way to economic salvation for the black masses. The national leaders of the black community were proposing this idea as a way of acquiring wealth across the United States. Buxton offered an ideal setting to experiment with this new way to financial security

1980-81 Interviews

As interviewees talked about ownership in 1980-81 they focused on several areas -- livestock, automobiles, real estate/houses/furnishings, and business ownership.

Livestock

Excerpts dealing with animals generally cited the fact that families owned cows, chickens, hogs, and other livestock and sometimes the respondent gave the actual number of

animals owned. This was not out of the ordinary. As mentioned earlier, ownership of land and what could be raised from it represented the only viable means of accumulating wealth until the northern migration began. Owning livestock provided visible evidence of acquired wealth and also served to insure that the physical needs of the family would be met. The regular size house lot provided by Consolidation Coal Company was a quarter acre specifically to provide space for some livestock in addition to gardens. For those who were more enterprising, livestock provided a means by which additional money could be made. Hobe Armstrong, through his meat market, and Harold Reasby, through his turkey farming were able to accumulate substantial wealth. (*The Iowa State Bystander*, December 6, 1907, n.p.)

Automobiles

Car ownership was often associated with the most prominent and wealthy people in the Buxton community. One respondent reported that, "We had two big shots there in Buxton, Reuben Gaines and B.F. Cooper. Both of them drove Cadillacs" (Reasby, 1981). Different car models also had assigned levels of prestige; owning a Cadillac was considered a luxury while owning a Ford was far more practical. (For a photograph of a vehicle driven by residents of the Buxton community see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 152, Figure 144) Regardless of the make or brand, car ownership was an exception for most people in the Buxton community.

Real Estate and Home Furnishings

Most informants were able to recall something about the home and land their parents owned when living in Buxton. The researchers for the 1980 -81 project obtained much information about size, appearance, and location of the house and lot. Owning your own home for some showed evidence of a higher economic status. The assumption was that if you did not live in a company house then you were pretty "well off" economically.

Acquiring land also seemed to be significant to coal miners. Several informants went into detail about the number of acres their parents owned, and how and when these were acquired.

My father moved out there then and started buying a 10 acre lot, with a little house on it from another person and he bought that of course he bought another 9 acre lot... he borrowed some I think that was going toward the last to get these other little lots he bought you know... altogether he had 29 cause he bought a 10 first and he bought another 10 and then he had a 9 (Brown, 1980a).

Also, Hobe Armstrong was perceived as the premier landowner in the community, according to several reports. He was a successful business man with a keen sense of how to acquire land and property. Jeanette Adams, a former resident of Buxton, wrote:

I don't know where them houses come from but over there close to where he lived he had several houses that he rented and then he started in buying these farms about every year he'd buy another farm, kept doing that... and I wouldn't have any idea how many farms he had when he died, he had a lot of them (Adams, 1980).

It was not uncommon for a miner to work all day in the mines and then come home to work in the farm fields. The women and children of these households often took responsibilities for home and farming chores because the husband was working in the mines. Some Buxtonites, such as Reuben Gaines, Sr., turned their farms into profitable businesses; he owned a turkey farm and a number of other businesses. In fact, Reuben Gaines had a small community named after him primarily because he had built many of the shops where merchants sold their goods. Mr. Gaines' livelihood was not in the mines; it was in the way he used his "business sense" and land to produce income. Others had chicken houses that they used to collect and sell eggs and poultry; some women used this as supplemental income for the family.

A few excerpts on this topic provide a very interesting picture of the financial means of some of the people in the Buxton community. For some, material gain was a major factor in establishing success and status (Brown, 1980).

And in the kitchen there was a cookstove because Big Bill Lee was who he was; it was a cookstove with an oven and a warming stove upon it and a water tank beside it that Big Bill Lee was supposed to have....

I never in my life lived in a house without a piano until I got too poor to have one during the depression. I never lived in a house that didn't have carpet on the floor until I got too poor to have any. Big Bill Lee's house was carpeted!

In the living room there was this big buck heating stove with Isinglass. That was the most beautiful thing.... Isinglass all in the door, and at night time when the lights were turned low, you laid on the floor and watched that. It was like watching a fire place.

Then there was the dining room with .. an oak dining room set. Buffet and china closet with all that glass in there. Even though I wasn't but ten years old when my mother died see I wasn't entrusted with the washing of it, but I was entrusted with the handing it (glass) back and forth. And in that dining room there was an ice box. A refrigerator. An oak refrigerator. The kind you put ice in.

...as I remember there was a piano, there was my father's big chair, a library table and a lamp on it. We were a reading family. And there was my mother's smaller rocker. And there was a davenport - couch thing. It was one of those that would open up.

From the perception of his daughter Marjorie Brown, Bill Lee was an individual who understood that he deserved the best in material goods. He felt he had attained a certain status in his income and career.

Some boasted about having carpet and linoleum on their floors, and owning pianos. Specific house furnishings implied a better standard of living which supports the concept of status-seeking efforts. One informant talked about one of the company engineers who made a zinc-lined bath tub. The engineer's house also had a pump in the kitchen. She assessed from this that they were rich. Again, there is evidence of assignment of status based on ownership.

Occupation

Occupation is another way of acquiring wealth. When a person acquires a specific education and acquires a particular job, the "ownership" of the education and job give him or her the ability to acquire wealth. Acquiring an education was important to many residents of Buxton and the idea was expressed in an excerpt from Majorie Brown's interview on what her father felt about the engineering training he had attained. She stated,

“He worked hard to become who he was. He dug coal to become an engineer. And he was fond of who he had become.” (Brown, 1980).

Business Ownership

The 1980-81 informants provided much information regarding the types of businesses in the Buxton community. Buxton had a meat market, a drug store, a department store (the Monroe Mercantile Company) and a host of other businesses. (For a photograph of the Monroe Mercantile Company see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 13, Figure 14 and pp. 68 and 69, Figures 47 and 48). The Perkins hotel, livery stable, undertaker, lumber house, bakery, restaurant, lunch wagon, boarding houses, hairdressers, bowling alley, barber shop, milliner's shop and pop bottling are only a few of the businesses listed. There were a number of people who had home businesses, working as sellers of eggs or produce, seamstresses, or travel agents. Owning a business set people apart. One informant associated the marriage of her aunt with the business that was owned by her fiancée's family rather than the man she was to marry. She said, “Sharp End - it had the bakery, the Lucas bakery and my youngest aunt married into that family.” The aunt in essence married the Lucas family and their bakery business rather than their son.

Some Buxton residents started their businesses literally from scratch. This provides more evidence that business ownership was viewed in the way that Harold Reasby spoke about his father and how he got his lunch cart business started.

....every Saturday they'd get off from work but I imagine they had a crap game a gambling game in the park and then he'd get him a wooden basket and make hamburgers and we didn't call them hotdogs back then we call them weiner sandwich and he'd fix it and boil eggs and he'd go round this crap game and sell it from the wooden basket till he saved enough money, half the money to build this little lunch cart in Buxton and then after then he went and borrowed Ms. Christison she was the women who headed the bank in the grocery store and then she loan the rest of the money to build this little lunch cart, that's the way he got started. He had \$250 said it cost him \$500 to build it and she loan him the other \$250, Ms. Christison. He worked in the mines until he got this little lunch cart and then he had quit working the mines before my sister got old enough he quit and went to running this little lunch cart during the time, see what I mean (Reasby, 1981).

For Mr. Reasby, owning his own business and working for himself was significant; so much so that he left his job working in the mines to work his lunch cart full time.

Part-time businesses were sometimes more lucrative than the mining jobs. An informant admitted that his father made more money with his team of horses, which he hired out for various reasons, than working in the mines. He made the bulk of his money by delivering coal, plowing, and doing other odd jobs with his team of horses. Often he would send his sons out to plow and plant seed for local farmers and of course he would get the money the boys earned. A substantial income was created through these odd jobs.

1994 Interviews

The 1994 interviewees talked about ownership in terms of the furniture, businesses, and clothing that their family members owned. They also talked about the financial environment in which they lived. Some were secure financially; others were not. Whatever the case, there were elements in their home life that helped them to know that their families were financially secure or insecure. Clothing and appearance were mentioned often in the 1994 interviews and will be covered in a separate chapter.

Financial Status

One area of ownership that was talked about quite often was financial status and/or security. There were numerous indicators that residents lived a financially comfortable life in Buxton. Dorothy Neal Collier implies that her family was financially secure in her following statement about Christmas gifts and money she saw around the house (See Appendix A.a).

.... on Christmas, we had a big Christmas tree and we lit candles on it. ... We never put a Christmas tree up until Christmas morning when Santa Claus would come. Mama must have put it up at night. And we'd wake up and see this tree with all the little candles on it, lit... We had toys, cause my brother had a projector that Paul talked about that's the first moving picture he'd ever seen, he said. And we had showed the little slides, you know, ... It had a little square box and it had a little coal lamp in it and you pushed the pictures through and they'd reflect on the wall. I had a doll and a buggy and a set of dishes. We had games and religious books, you know and things. But I think the cost of the company store and everything, people could, those who wanted things, they could have it..... So I have had a good life, I have had it good while I was younger.

I guess mama had, I guess they had money... we had the jars and of course she'd go out of town, you didn't pay the livery stable money for the, you know script, I don't imagine. They had to pay them money. I don't remember so much about money. Only thing I can remember is mama and papa, they had money in quart jars behind the bed. I can remember that. (laugh) Just jars of money, it looked like a whole lot of money to us, but....

Dorothy Neal Collier recalled her family getting new furniture -- a davenport and a cookstove. She recalled vividly her living room which was used for Sundays only and was the only room in the house that was carpeted. In the living room along with the green, plush davenport with arms that were like lion's mouths were two Morris chair loungers and a couple of rockers and a library table. The living room was undoubtedly the most special room in the house (Collier, 1980; See Appendix A.a).

The Taylor family was fairly well to do in terms of finances. This is verified by the informant's information related to income of the family. Both he and his father were entry drivers. Charles Taylor stated:

Entry drivers made a hundred and thirty-five, a hundred and forty, or a hundred and fifty dollars in eleven days and five hours. (got paid) Twice a month (Taylor, 1980).

Well, at that time, if you wanted to make money, that's where you had to be. Buxton had nothing but black people with hotels and things. Out of any place in the United States, if you wanted to make any money you had to go in the coal mines. At the time I started work I was getting seven dollars and fifty cents for an eight hour shift. That was company work, like driving mules and setting timbers and unloading. The motormen, -- they had all black motormen,-- they were getting eleven dollars a shift. That was a lot of money in those days! When I started to work they paid them all in gold. Gold and silver dollars. They had \$2 gold pieces, \$1 gold pieces; fives, tens, and twenty dollar gold pieces (Taylor, 1980).

When asked which status group his family fit into, Taylor confidently stated that they fell into the middle status group in the Buxton community and based this statement solely on the fact that his family had the things they wanted, lived "good", and were independent. The upper class in the community, according to some Buxtonites, had lots of money and were

able to trade cars every year (See Appendix A.c). Upper status was based clearly on materialism -- what one owned.

Quentin Meece did not know specifically the source of both his parents' income. He knew, however, that his mother and father made approximately two thousand dollars a year. He assumed that his father received money as a justice of the peace for Buxton and for his work with the company union. His father was also involved with several business enterprises in the community. His mother also had the sewing business and real estate from which she received money.

The lifestyle of the Jones family can be classified as upper status. Sue Williams had little information regarding the amount of money the family made on a yearly basis. But from her perspective there was always money around the house or gifts of money to the children, in particular, from close friends of the family. Her Uncle George was constantly giving her pennies - so much so that she began to turn them down when he gave them to her because her father gave them to her all of the time. Sue remembered that her family kept their money in a steel safe that her father had built. He never kept it locked so it wasn't a novelty for her to see gold daily. She also remembered receiving a \$10 gold piece from her Uncle George and a \$5 gold piece from a Mr. Taylor for her birthday. (Her older sister received a Jersey calf for her birthday from Uncle George.) It was not uncommon to find \$50 in gold pieces laying around her house. Sue's grandmother and mother had a cleaning woman that came in to assist with housework two or three days a week which implied that there was extra money to pay for the services. The family also had phone service. Sue's mother was able to call from house to house when she was allowed to have visits from friends. This was a convenience that not many were able to afford (See Appendix A.f). In addition to this, Sue referred to her father and grandfather as "gentlemen farmers." Gentlemen farmers owned the land but contracted with outside people to farm their land. Her father didn't work on the farm at all. The only farming she remembered was done by a white man named Mr. Peterow.

Business/Entrepreneurial Spirit

Entrepreneurial activities were practiced by people of all status levels. Melba Williams' mother had an egg business. She had ten children, seven of whom lived. Most of her time and energy were centered in caring for her children, her chickens, her home, and her egg business. Her daughter stated,

you gotta realize she had a baby every year or nine months. Carrying babies, and taking care of babies and washing on the washboard. It was hard. It wasn't easy. The kids didn't stand around and wait for serving. The chicken house had to be cleaned out. She had to clean that and she had to go out and get the eggs. (See Appendix A.d and Appendix A.e)

She was enterprising in that she sold her eggs by an agreement made with the owners of the grocery wagon and, although she received lesser profits due to this arrangement, she continued to maintain her business. It was the one thing that she could take ownership of, apart from her family. She was solely responsible for its success. This represented ownership to her and an opportunity to contribute to the finances of the family in addition to everything else that she contributed (See Appendix A.d & A.e).

Dorothy Neal Collier's father was a entrepreneur in his own right. He was a coal miner, a tailor, a saloon owner, and a player on the local baseball team - The Buxton Wonders.

Quentin Meece's father was involved in several small enterprises in Buxton, which included a laundry and a bakery. His mother had exceptional business sense also. Quentin Meece's mother was a seamstress who used her business to help supplement the family income. She would make dresses for \$3.50 to \$5.00. She was, as he recalled, the only black seamstress in Buxton. She sewed for people in the community and had more than enough to keep her busy (See Appendix A.c).

Mrs. Meece also owned a poultry business. Her business consisted of a chicken house about 60 feet long, with three incubators. She raised chickens through the severely cold winters, using heaters to keep the chickens warm. She sold the chickens and the eggs. On both sides of his family, Quentin thought there were people who were not necessarily

“business oriented” (which he thought meant to come out of a business environment) but “business inclined” (which he thought meant to have a nature for business). They were not satisfied with just being miners or wives of miners. His mother was not just satisfied with relying on her husband and what he could produce. She thrived in her chicken and sewing businesses, and in real estate, also. She bought land in Oklahoma, anticipating that one day there would be oil found on the land. This showed her to be a business person and much more progressive in thought than most women of her era. The Meeces also owned a house in Oskaloosa which served as an additional source of income for the family as a rental property (See Appendix A.b).

And finally, Mr. Wilson’s father was involved in a number of businesses in Buxton. He owned a rooming house and a restaurant. All races stayed in the rooming house that he owned. He also moved his businesses from site to site as coal towns folded. While in Buxton his family also operated a lunch cart for which he paid \$50. He was a recruiter for the Consolidation Coal Company and he also worked as a miner (See Appendix A.g).

The Iowa State Bystander

One reason that the black newspaper began was to report the news and activities of the black community which were blatantly ignored in white newspapers. E. Franklin Frazier believed that the “Negro press” was probably one of the most successful business enterprises of the black race. It was initially organized as a medium in which the opinions of the black intelligentsia could be expressed. It evolved into a medium in which “Negro protests” could be voiced and by which the “Great Migration” from the South was stimulated. The “black bourgeoisie” has always used it as a means to promote themselves and their best interests and as a mechanism for “racial uplift.” Excerpts from *The Iowa Bystander* as presented here will support that much of what was written in the Buxton column was written either for “racial uplift” or to promote the “black bourgeoisie” ideal (Frazier, 1957).

Automobiles

There were numerous accounts in the *Iowa State Bystander* of residents who owned automobiles. The Iowa State Bystander staff writers made a point to include the names of those residents who had purchased cars. Such notable people as Hobe Armstrong, the Hon.

Geo. Woodson, (*Bystander*, July 26, 1912), and Reuben Gaines (*Bystander*, November 4, 1910) made up a considerable part of the automobile news since they purchased autos on a regular basis. The Monroe Mercantile Company even made news in that it raffled off a Ford automobile that cost approximately \$400 as a sales promotion. Mr. Louis Reasby was the fortunate winner (*Bystander*, January 12, 1918). Clearly by the standards of *The Iowa State Bystander* automobile ownership set people apart or such news would not have been reported. Automobile ownership was a status symbol in this community.

Occupation

In the *Iowa State Bystander - Buxton Souvenir Edition*, September 18, 1903, Marjorie Brown's father "Big Bill Lee" was highlighted. He had attained a comfortable level of status in the Buxton community, primarily through the job he had acquired and through his education as an engineer. It stated:

The above cut is a true likeness of Mr. W. W. Lee, one of our young progressive and industrious men who is engineer at No. 10 mines. He was born in Charlesville, Va. in 1870, came with his parents to Muscatine, Iowa in 1872 where he was raised and educated in the public schools. Later he learned the engineer's trade and in 1893 came to Muchakinock, where he was employed as hoisting engineer, and three years ago moved to Buxton and is now engineer at No. 10. He is a member of the famous Buxton band playing a BB base, a member of the Odd Fellows and K. of P. He has recently taken to him a beautiful and amiable young lady from Leon, Iowa, Miss Bertie Pugh (n.p.).

Blacks were involved in many occupations other than mining in the Buxton community. There are many references in *The Iowa State Bystander* to specific occupations which included druggists, grocers, milliners, teachers, and farmers.

Ownership of Real Estate, Homes, Furnishings, and Businesses

The Iowa State Bystander spent a great deal of time and attention on reporting what people owned. There were numerous accounts that gave detailed information about homes, land, investments, and businesses. Those reported on were the most prominent people of the coal mining community. This type of reporting could probably be construed either as an effort to "uplift the race" or as plain gossip to sell newspapers. Some of the details given are questionable but nevertheless the information was printed. Through the columnist in the

Iowa State Bystander, residents found out that Reuben Gaines, Sr. was a "race" man who was very successful in business and who had built a hotel that cost approximately \$10,000. Readers also found out that Mr. Gaines owned a beautiful 10-room house with a large new barn and a hot water furnace. He also bought his son a two-seated automobile and all of this occurred between 1904 and 1912. Also, *The Iowa State Bystander* reported that Hobe Armstrong was one of the richest men in the state of Iowa; he had a son who ran his meat market and a daughter who was cashier at the bank in Buxton. Unlike Reuben Gaines, Sr., Hobe Armstrong was not referred to as a "race" man. There were numerous columns on the fine people of Buxton who owned farms, homes, businesses, and held prominent positions in the community; among these were William Reasby and Jack Meece (*Bystander*, November 17, 1905, n.p.), W.H. London, C. R. Foster, W. J. Jones, Fr. Taylor, and the Hon. George Woodson (*Bystander*, December 27, 1912, n.p.). Jack Meece was also involved in several small enterprises in Buxton, which included a laundry and a bakery. Surely from the perspective of *The Iowa State Bystander* there were citizens of Buxton who were assigned status based on what they owned as seen in the following account. The home of Sue William's grandfather is described in *The Iowa State Bystander Buxton Souvenir Edition of 1903*.

This beautiful picture represents the home of Mr. Wilson ----, who was born in Virginia 1869. Has worked for the Consolidation Coal Company for twenty-two years. His house is 26x28 with --- 20x20 one and a half story... ten rooms. It is located in the south east part of the town of Buxton (n.p.).

B. F. Cooper's drug store was also highlighted in the *Iowa State Bystander Souvenir Edition of 1903*. He was exceptional in that he was one of a few black drug store owners in the state of Iowa.

The Pioneer Drug Store - B. F. Cooper, the owner of the oldest drug store, owned by colored people in Iowa. Mr. Cooper first established his drug store in Muchakinock and moved to Buxton when the town was first organized. He is a social and successful business man (p. 1).

There are many more detailed accounts of the personal possessions and houses of some of Buxton's most prominent residents in the *Iowa State Bystander*; these serve as typical examples of how the "Negro press" reported the achievements and successes of African Americans in Buxton.

Education

Education was a key factor in determining status in the black community from the time of Reconstruction to the First World War. It has always been an avenue of advancement for blacks. Upper status blacks have always used their education to move into leadership positions in their society. The significance of education to the Buxton community and its application in determining status will be discussed in this section.

1980-81 Interviews

In the 1980-81 interviews, the importance of attaining an education was emphasized by most of the informants. Typically these ideas were perpetuated by the family and through cultural activities in the home.

Four key factors surfaced in the 1980-81 interviews related to education and its significance to people who lived in the Buxton community. First, providing an education for the children of Buxton was very important. This was a common theme throughout the interviews. Educating the children, for the most part, was a cooperative effort between the parent, teacher, and student as expressed by this former teacher of Buxton children.

If you had parents who cooperated with the school and the children would cooperate with the school, the child could acquire a very nice education. We had some intelligent and very smart children and then in some classes we'd have all size children. When I was teaching 2nd and 3rd grade, some of the 3rd graders were old as me. Well, you see its just up to the child and the parent. (Brown, 1980a; Reeves, 1980)

The significance of schooling was evident as Susie Robinson talked about the adjustments that were made to accommodate the children and teachers when the school house burned down. Classes were set up in different buildings across the town to insure that the children would continue their education (Robinson, 1981).

It was not uncommon for those who wanted an advanced education to take their children to other towns to attend high school. One mother contemplated leaving Buxton and moving to Des Moines so that her children could be educated beyond grammar school (Stapleton, 1980). One family anticipated moving as far away as Oklahoma to attend high school. The pursuit and attainment of an education was deemed an accomplishment in the lives of blacks of this era.

There was a strong work ethic and educational commitment associated with those students who traveled to other towns for advanced education. Valetta Fields talked about her efforts to complete her education at the University of Iowa around 1917.

And we couldn't have afforded a Currier hall which wasn't even built but we couldn't afford that. The order of the day was you lived with a family for room and board and did a little chores you know. And I lived with a family named Swichers and they had some relatives here a lawyer here but anyway before I got there those kids that had gone before said I've got a job for you so when I went I had a job. And that's where I lived for until I had to have a 8:00 class... and Mr. Swichers they weren't (sic) that kind of people... I couldn't have got that 8:00 with that time and everything so I moved with my reference librarian at the university library for my last year. That's the way we got through school and the boys tended furnaces, none of that now you know and cleaned up. Of course, they waited table with fraternities and sororities and things like that. I majored in English, don't expect it but I said that was the easiest thing to major in I guess and Botany for the minor. (Fields, 1981)

Second, there was a keen awareness of the competition between work and education, particularly for young boys. Young boys often had to forgo an education to assist their fathers in the mines. Teachers saw examples of this phenomenon on a regular basis. The good wages that were earned in the mines often halted the educational careers of young men and locked them into a life of coal mining. The whole family benefited from the additional source of income until the young men grew up and left home to start their own lives and/or families. Working hard in the mines and earning money became the life goal of these young men. Children made "work" or "education" a priority depending on the background and value systems of the family.

Third, school was one of the settings in which children learned “refined” behavior - or simply “good manners.” Some children responded to the instruction and others disliked it as expressed by Charles Taylor.

You knew you were in school in Buxton. You said “yes ma’am”, yes sir”,” nor (sic) sir” and I’m sorry and all that stuff; do your own work and study when you were in school. Sat there like a bunch of damn zombies. No whispering, no playing and none of that stuff (Taylor, 1980).

Keep in mind that this comment was made by a man who was raised in a blue collar family and knew very early that the priority in his life would be “work.”

Inappropriate behavior was not tolerated in the schools. Teachers required model behavior of each student. If students behaved inappropriately, they were sent home with notes to parents or the teacher visited the parents to make them aware of the problem. If behavior was too disruptive, it resulted in dismissal from school, as in the case of a young man who, in the 8th grade, took a dead bull snake and left it on the door steps of his school house. The teacher fainted and could not be revived for three hours. He was expelled from school and therefore his father required him to go to work (Hart, 1980).

For those children who did behave appropriately, the teachers provided the basic principles of good manners. Children learned appropriate responses when in the company of adults and general principles of behavior for all settings. One teacher taught the inappropriateness of drinking water from a “common” dipper. Her students were taught to make paper cups for individual use. Although this would not be classified as refined from the perspective of the aristocrats of the east, it certainly taught students that there was an “appropriate way” to do things in most situations. Proper use of etiquette was the foundation of “refined” behavior.

Fourth, academic objectives were not only attained in the grammar and high school settings. Some Buxtonites took correspondence courses to complete their education. One informant talked about her father’s correspondence education. He became a master mechanic through his studies at correspondence schools located in Chicago and Ohio. He used his

education for a job with the Consolidation Coal Company. This enabled him to provide financial security for his family as a master mechanic.

The 1994 Interviews

Most of the informants in the 1994 interviews had minimal education but knew the significance of a good education for their children. Education was revered by most blacks. One informant's mother compared having an education to having the right skin color. Education for her was the equalizer for those who were not fortunate enough to have light complexions. According to her,

she figured if somebody was "black" (referring to skin shade) and educated they were on the same level as someone who was light complexioned and finished about the fifth grade. Their excuse was 'Oh, he's educated'" (See Appendix A.e).

Paul Wilson was encouraged to study law by his brother-in-law, a well known lawyer from Des Moines named S. Joe Brown. Although he was working for the railroad five days a week he began to study law informally, through working in his brother-in-law's office. Mr. Wilson stated:

People who went to college were held in high esteem and often placed on a pedestal in the community because they were rising above their situation to create a better life for themselves. (See Appendix A.g)

Acquiring an education made a significant impact on your station in life according to Mr. Wilson. The perceptions of education in the 1994 interviews were very much influenced by the background and experiences of the people who lived in Buxton. Staunch "blue collar" workers did not view education in the same way that those from more prominent backgrounds viewed education. The upper status Buxtonites had different values, experiences, and aspirations than the lower status people when related to education, work, living environment, travel, and income. Based on these beliefs, status could be assigned by the way individuals viewed education, work, cultural activities, church, organizational activities, and money.

Charles Taylor came from a strong “blue collar” background. His father worked in the mines and he and his brothers started working in the mines at very young ages. Work took precedence over getting a good education and of course, going to college received no consideration. Tracking young boys into lives in the mines was common and was often necessary to make ends meet. Charles Taylor did not lament that he was not able to complete his education. Admittedly, he made a respectable amount of money in the mines and he enjoyed spending it on suits (Taylor, 1980).

The life experience of Quentin Meece was quite the opposite of Charles Taylor’s. His education also started at an early age but the arena in which he learned was very different from the coal mining rooms in which Charles Taylor grew up. Quentin Meece’s education started when his mother encouraged his father to take Quentin to some of the meetings his father “chaired.” She knew the significance of exposing her son to as many board meetings and business enterprises as she could. As he sat in those meetings he learned numerous lessons about speaking, influencing, working, and relationship building.

Education was very important to the Meece family. Quentin Meece very eloquently described how his mother viewed the importance of education and achievement in this excerpt:

She wasn’t formally educated , she wasn’t involved with that or had not had the opportunity, but I think she had those desires for the children to be educated, for her daughter to have some musical ability or attainment and to have a home... that indicates a certain cultural desire. Not just to work and make money but to have something else. The fact that all alone she bought a home there in Oskaloosa, that says something and to have what she thought was oil in Oklahoma. Nowadays that was not exceptional but in those days it was very unusual. (See Appendix A.b)

The Meece family was an excellent example of how discipline leads to success in life. Education is sometimes related to discipline. The parents in the Meece family instilled in family members the necessity of exercising discipline in all areas of their lives. Family members did not gamble, did not smoke, did not drink, and were expected to live a Christian life. Children were expected to live by the golden rule (See Appendix A.b).

The self-discipline that each member of this family cultivated contributed to the eventual educational success of all of the children. Quentin Meece attended Des Moines University and the George Williams College of the University of Chicago where he received his master's degree in social work. Other siblings attended college and all of the Meece children received high school diplomas. (See Appendix A.b)

The Iowa State Bystander

The Iowa State Bystander made a point to highlight educational activities and people who were instrumental in educating the masses. Teachers were often talked about in the paper, particularly as special educational activities were taking place. For example, Mrs. London and Mrs. Blackburn were commended for their efforts in planning the commencement ceremonies for a graduating class (*The Iowa State Bystander*, April 28, 1916).

If young people were attending school out-of-town, the *Iowa State Bystander* reported it. as in the following example.

The following children who are attending school out of the city are home to spend Christmas: Miss Riola Buford, of Hiteman, Mazarine Ragsdale and Cleopatra Smith from Des Moines, Percy Smith and Lehman Smith of Albia (December 27, 1912, n.p.)

The paper was also instrumental in reporting how attendance was going at the local schools. It reported that Buxton schools were fairly well filled during the school year in 1911. Lower grades had the most students and the demand for schooling made it necessary for the director to advertise for a teacher for an additional classroom. This excerpt highlighted the fact that there were educational activities in Buxton, a very important part of "racial uplift." It also motivated parents to send their children to school. Buxton had approximately five public schools and 15 teachers in 1911. This shows a commitment on the part of Consolidation Coal Company to educate the children of miners and the miners themselves.

For those who could not attend school during the day, there was a night school that was managed by Professor C. W. Rodgers and enrolled approximately 35 to 40 scholars in

1909. The importance of learning is exhibited in that a night school was created probably to accommodate the needs of those people who were too old for grade school and who could not go to school during the day because of their jobs. The excerpt from the paper is interesting in that it discussed a public debate in which the two parties were to resolve whether or not a woman should be a man's equal in education.

Among the most interesting entertainment this season was the night school program at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church last Monday evening. The program consisted of songs, declamations and a debate. The declamation "Advice to Girls," by Mrs. Mary Rhodes, was rendered with much interest. The debate was the main feature of the evening. The subject was "Resolve, That women should not be educated equally with men." Affirmative: Rev. W. H. Simmons and Mr. J. I. Carter; negative, Mrs. Emma Simmons and Mrs. Emma March. This was a hard fought battle. The affirmative struggled hard to convince the judges that woman was inferior to man and should not be educated equally with him, but the ladies were successful in convincing the judges that she was not inferior to man and should be his equal in education. Both ladies deserve much credit for their manner of presenting the subject. The leading speaker, Mrs. Simmons, displayed natural ability in presenting the subject while Mrs. March showed firmness including stubborn facts. The judges rendered their decision in favor of the negative. (*The Iowa State Bystander*, October 28, 1909, n.p.)

The fact that the judges decided in favor of educating women equally is an indication of the significance of education for all in this coal mining community.

The editor of *The Iowa State Bystander*, John E. Thompson, reported on the Buxton schools in very favorable terms. He wrote:

Last year they had only four teachers. This year they have a new twelve room modern school house costing \$10,000 with eleven instructors, all colored but one, with an enrollment of 520 last Monday and more to enter, and these rooms are already overcrowded. Ye editor had the pleasure of going through the school and seeing it in session through the courtesy of the superintendent, prof. M. J. Gilliam, who is one of the most thorough and enthusiastic school men that I have ever met, every inch an educator, who for experience and qualification has but few equals. He is a graduate of Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., at one time held the chair in mathematics at Wilberforce, but for the past five years he was principal of the Indianapolis schools. Indianapolis, Ind. The other teachers are Mr. E. E. Covington, Mrs. W. H. London, Miss Gertrude Lewis of Dubuque, Miss Bessie Owens of Ottumwa, Mrs. Etta Jackson, Miss Ella Mays of Newton, Miss Madge

Thorp (white), Miss Beatrice Terrell and Miss Eva Bates. They are all good teachers and we expect good work this winter there.(October 20, 1905)

It is interesting to note that the editor highlighted the educational background of the superintendent of schools. It was impressive and exceptional that a coal mining town could attract a man with such credentials. Also, note that the editor clearly sets the academic preparation of the superintendent apart from the other teachers in the school system.

Was education a status indicator in this community? Yes, and it was increasingly important as educational levels advanced. *The Iowa State Bystander* exemplifies this fact in two ways. 1) It reported educational events and activities that were going on in Buxton which emphasized the importance of education to its citizens, and 2) The newspaper also highlighted individuals who had gone on to advanced education and gave specific information regarding their accomplishments (colleges or university attended, degrees attained). These people were set apart as successes. Other examples of the impact of education on status in a community will be discussed in the section on community leadership and status assignment in the Buxton community.

Social Affiliations and Club Life

The turn of the century was a time of proliferation of social, recreational, and organizational activity. There were a number of social institutions that emphasized the class consciousness of blacks. Some of the organizations were restricted by gender. Numerous organizations existed among the ranks of the upper status people and Buxton had its share. The primary difference between upper and lower status blacks was in the restrictions placed on memberships in the societies and organizations frequented by upper status blacks. An examination of the club life of Buxtonites may provide some insights into the status structure of the Buxton community.

1980-81 Interviews

The 1980-81 interviews reflect that Buxton had a high level of social and club activities. Informants tended to list the types of social activities that were most prevalent in the town rather than describe what the social activities and clubs represented. The most common activities were related to churches, the YMCA, and the benevolent groups.

Most of the informants could name the churches that were in the community and provided information on the types of positions that were held in the churches. Some of their family members were responsible for key activities and roles in the churches of Buxton. Several were deacons (male and female); some were chairpersons of church auxiliaries and boards; and others were responsible for program activities and hosting special guests who visited Buxton. It was the center of religious, social, and to some extent recreational activities in the community. The church was limited, however, in that it did not serve all people.

In contrast, the YMCA was viewed as a center of activity for all Buxtonites. Most of the informants recalled the YMCA and the activities that took place there. The center itself had several floors and housed an auditorium, meeting rooms, and space for recreational activities. The benevolent orders, clubs, and other groups used this center as a regular meeting place for their activities. The YMCA was also the place where noted speakers addressed the community of Buxton. Such noted people as Booker T. Washington and his wife addressed the people of Buxton at area churches and the YMCA. Vaudeville and minstrel shows, along with other theatrical performances, took place in the auditorium at the YMCA. Educational programs also took place at the "Y". It was a center where many diverse activities took place in the Buxton community, in which many of the informants' family members participated.

The benevolent orders were also discussed in most of the 1980-81 interviews that were conducted with black former residents. Their family members participated in a host of organizations including the Masons, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias. Some were leaders in these organizations; others were devout members. Beyond a doubt, the benevolent organizations were viewed as the most distinguishing organizations in the community and many Buxtonites sought to become affiliated with them.

These orders were very important for men and for women. It was out of these orders that men and women with leadership abilities were trained and developed into community leaders. It is interesting to note that the lodges were segregated. Although there was mixing

in other areas of community life, there were institutions in which mixing just did not occur; the benevolent orders was one of those.

At least one account of the selection process for the Eastern Stars implied that there were criteria used to exclude some from the privilege of being a member of the different Masonic orders. The criteria may have related to each applicant's status in the community.

The Eastern Stars, I remember that. Unfortunately someone took my application and I'm not a lodge person. I think Mr. Potter, and he took my application and also Mary Miles. There were three of us. I can't remember who the other person was. But anyway I was accepted; one of the three was blackballed. (Reeves, 1980)

Specific criteria were used to weed out individuals who were not desirable members.

Elements of status can be identified in all of these areas.

One of the most talked-about topics in the interviews was the organization of different groups that provided entertainment to the community. Although many of the informants did not have direct involvement in the groups, they made a lasting impression upon informants as viable parts of the social and recreational environment of the community. The Buxton Band, the Buxton Wonders, and several orchestras contributed tremendously to the quality of life in the Buxton community. Many social activities and functions were centered on or enhanced by these organizations.

1994 Interviews

The 1994 interviews provide more detail about involvement in different social activities and clubs in the Buxton community. The first thing that is notable is that the level of participation of a family in social activities and clubs can reflect their attained level of status in a community. The level of social, political, and civic involvement can signify who is low status and who is high status. The higher the involvement in social and club organizations, the higher the level of status assigned. There are examples of these different levels of status throughout 1994 interviews.

The family of Melba Williams was slow to get involved in activities outside of the home and with good reason:

We just played with the neighbors. We never had any social affiliations. We lived on an acreage. The only social affiliation we had was the closest people. The Joneses were near the road and then on the other side of us different people lived and then upon the hill the Stovalls, then across the road upon the hill the Londons. (See Appendix A.e)

This family was isolated from the mainstream of the town and rarely interacted with anyone other than those families in their neighborhood. This family also had no affiliation with any of the churches in Buxton. The church is the backbone of the African-American community. It was the social center in many respects. To remove oneself from this institution, whether a believer or not, would quickly result in isolation from most of the community leaders and social activities of the town.

Dorothy Neal Collier's family had a higher level of involvement than the family of Melba Williams. Mrs. Neal, Dorothy's mother, was involved in several social and secret societies. She was "a Federated" (belonged to a Federated Club) and she also belonged to the Eastern Star and the Household of Ruth. As stated she was a member of different organizations and consistently attended them but she was not a leader. When her lodge met, she was always there. The family was also a member of the Baptist church (Collier, 1980).

Recreation was also an important part of Dorothy Neal Collier's family life. They went to the show or movies once a week and they went roller skating at every opportunity. Both father and mother were involved with recreational activities of the community. Dorothy's father was very involved as a member of the Buxton Wonders, Buxton's semi-professional baseball team. Dorothy admitted that much of her father's time was spent on the road with the Wonders in season, on his job in the mines, or in one of his other work settings - saloon or tailor shop (Collier, 1980).

Charles Taylor's family had some affiliations with different community organizations. The father was the most active. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Masons. The family attended the First Baptist Church where his father was a deacon and his mother was secretary of the church. The young boys of the family were also active with the YMCA and the glee club and a number of other activities, including baseball (Taylor, 1980).

Paul Wilson had extensive knowledge of the activities that took place in Buxton. His mother and father were involved in different community projects and consequently he was very active in community activities. Paul's father belonged to two secret orders that were organized in Buxton, the Knights of Pythias and the Odd Fellows (See Appendix A.g).

The Meece family was very much involved in civic work and politics in the Buxton community. Quentin Meece's father was chairman of the board at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the largest Baptist church in Buxton. He was president of the Board at the YMCA for 19 or 20 years. He was an exceptional community leader.

.... he was an organization man, anyway because as evidence of that his work in the church, YMCA, ...oh, yes, he was a 32nd, 33rd degree mason and he worked at his masonry....he was a very ardent mason, knight's templar, a shiner, right on up to a (See Appendix A.c)

The Meece family was very active in the community. His mother and sisters were Eastern Stars and his brothers were quite active with the upper houses of Masonic orders. The family was involved in church auxiliaries and the YMCA activities. His sister played the piano and organ for the local movie house (See Appendix A.b).

Sue Williams' mother was a housewife with a grade school education. She was also very much involved in the Buxton community. She was an ordained deacon at the African Methodist Episcopal church under Bishop Craig. It was not uncommon for the African Methodist Episcopal church to have women deacons. Historically, women have been very active in leadership positions in the African American churches. Sue's mother was also involved with the Eastern Star and she was a participant in the parents-teachers association in the school system. Mrs. Jones, Sue's mother, was quite a bit more active in organizations than her husband. Sue's father had a grade school education and was responsible for running the turbines or electric power for the mines. He was exceptional when working with engines. All the men in the Jones family were Masons. He was a member of the Baptist church where his mother and father were the "pillar and posts" of the congregation (See Appendix A.f).

The Iowa State Bystander

The Iowa State Bystander took every opportunity to report social events that occurred in Buxton. In most of the accounts there are basic elements that seem to be correlated with what I call "Buxton refined."

Social activities

Dinners were a popular social activity in the Buxton community. The newspaper accounts typically gave the names of the hosts and guests, the type of music that was played, a menu, a description of decorations, and a rating on the evening's events. A dinner given by the Ashby family in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Gaines was reported in the July 10, 1908 edition of *The Iowa State Bystander*.

Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Gaines royally entertained at the beautiful "Ashby Terrace" home in Buxton's southeast suburb, Sunday, July 4th. It was either great foresight on the part of Mrs. Lizzie Ashby or an inside "Tipp" from the weather prophet which prompted her to have her fourth of July celebration on Sunday, the real 4th, instead of Monday, the legal 4th. Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Gaines were the special guest (sic) of honor. They arrived at 1 o'clock and dinner was served promptly at 2. There were present at the sumptuous feast: Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Gaines, Mrs. Maggie Jackson, Mr. W. W. Lewis, Lawyer George H. Woodson and Mr. and Mrs. Howard Ashby. The table was supplied with vegetables fresh from the home garden; spring chickens were obtained from the Ashby poultry yard; cream from the "Terrace" dairy was used in making the ice cream, which was pronounced the richest and best of the season; home made cake was rich and in abundance for awhile; lemonade, ice water, cigars for the gentlemen, who strolled off to the tree, and other refreshments were also enjoyed by the party and the entire afternoon was pleasantly spent. After the dinner the party walked over the little farm and took a look at the cows, hogs, chickens and the splendid garden of fruit, flowers, and vegetables after which the party returned to the lawn. At about 5 o'clock the guests departed saying that the visits should be renewed and exchanged many times before the autumn leaves shall fall (n.p.).

The accounts of different social events in Buxton proved to be some of the most enlightening in terms of providing information related to "genteel performance." In the event mentioned above, the name given the home implied a palatial estate with gardens and a well cared for lawn. The guests for the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Gaines, were probably classed as upper status in the community. He owned several businesses in Buxton. The

highest quality goods were used to prepare the meal, which denotes an element of expense in the preparation. The measures taken by this family to entertain special guests indicates that they were held in high esteem. It is difficult to visualize how all of the events compare to similar events in urban settings, but as described here the function at "Ashby Terrace" certainly had a "genteel" ambiance.

There were accounts of numerous "balls" at which orchestras provided the music. Here is one account.

November 20, 1896

The "McKinley Ball" was a grand affair Thursday eve; Smith's Orchestra furnished the music. Mrs. Dora Smith had charge of the refreshments and as usual under the management of B. F. Cooper the ball was a success.

In this excerpt there are a couple of things that create an image of the "genteel". The fact that they called the activity a ball and that an orchestra provided the music is an indication that perhaps there was an element of gentility in this community.

December 28, 1900

Everything is coming on fine for the Twentieth Century Club's banquet. Many are expected to be in attendance from all over the state. President McKinley was extended an invitation and the following reply received:

Executive Mansion, Washington

December 15, 1900

Mr. B. F. Cooper Muchakinock, Iowa

My dear sir: In the president's behalf I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant with enclosure, and to express his regret that owing to the pressure of public business he is precluded from accepting many of the kind invitations which come to him. Assuring you that your thoughtfulness and courtesy are appreciated, believe.

Very truly your.

Geo. B. Cleteyou,

Sec to the Pres.

This event is obviously presented as an event worthy of the presence of the president of the United States of America. This was a common practice in the African American community. If a grand event was scheduled then all the appropriate dignitaries were invited so that the regret letters could be read to the participants when the event got under way.

And then there is the account of Mrs. Booker T. Washington's visit to Buxton. The reception she received provides a keen view of the very fine treatment that dignitaries received when visiting Buxton. This account was reported in the December 11, 1914 *The Iowa State Bystander*, p. 3.

600 Citizens of Buxton Hear Mrs. Booker T. Washington

Mrs. Booker T. Washington was met in Hamilton on Wednesday, December 2, by Mrs. J. H. McGrew, chairman of the arrangement committee and whose guest Mrs. Washington was while in Buxton. They were taken by auto to the McGrew residence, where a committee of club women were awaiting their arrival.

At 12 o'clock luncheon was served. Those present were Mesdames E. A. Carter, W. H. Bailey, C. G. Southall, W. H. Cooke, A. P. Sharp, Secretary and Mrs. J. H. McGrew. Dr. E. A. Carter delivered a very interesting and helpfull (sic) lecture on the "Health Condition and Prevention of Disease."...Mrs. Washington was present and spoke along the same line.

The Banquet. At 6 o'clock a party of twenty were taken by auto to the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Neeley in South Buxton, where the following menu was served: Oyster soup, crackers, celery, baked chicken, gravy, creamed potatoes, candied sweet potatoes, pickle, apple salad, ice cream, cake, black coffee. The dining room was beautifully decorated with Tuskegee pennants, cut and potted flowers. Each church, the four clubs, and the schools were represented at the gathering.

The spacious auditorium of the YMCA was filled long before the hour for the program to begin and more than 150 persons were refused admittance...At 8 o'clock the Buxton concert band began peeling forth beautiful strains. Amid loud applause Mrs. Washington was then conducted to the stage. After the rendition of a few selections by the band Hon. Geo. H. Woodson, as master of ceremonies called the house to order.Mrs. Washington was next introduced by Hon. Geo. H. Woodson.

Mrs. Washington was taken Thursday morning in Dr. Carter's private car to Albia, en route for Chicago. She enjoyed her visit in Buxton and citizens expressed themselves as having been greatly entertained and benefited by her lecture and visit.

This account of Mrs. Washington's visit to Buxton reveals several things about status in the Buxton community. The first thing it reveals is that only certain people were qualified

to escort Mrs. Washington while she was in Buxton, which implies the use of some kind of status assessment. Some of these people were of the highest status in the community. She was to stay at the home of Mr. and Mrs. McGrew. She had lunch with only a small committee of the Ladies' Clubs which she was there to talk to. One of the committee women was Rose Warren Carter, the wife of Dr. E. A. Carter who was employed by the Consolidation Coal Company. While in Buxton it appeared that she was in the company of a very small circle of people. Her dinner banquet was at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Neeley; he was one of Buxton's most successful businessmen. Representatives from key organizations in town were invited to attend. She was introduced to the audience by the Hon. George Woodson.

The second thing it reveals is that the very finest in everything was available for this notable guest - the finest food, lodging, and transportation. The day after her lecture she was driven to Albia by Dr. Carter. She was exposed only to the most outstanding citizens of the community. These were the people that had status according to the organizing committee for Mrs. Washington's visit.

Recreational Activities

Status can be implied in the types of recreational activities a community participates in. Buxton had a long list of activities in which its people participated. The YMCA was a center of activity for this community. It had an auditorium, various meeting rooms for the fraternal organizations, a pool room, and other facilities that were designed to meet the needs of the community.

There were numerous sports activities to get involved with, including tennis, basketball, and shuffle board. All of these activities and equipment for them were available through the YMCA. For 50 cents a month a person could obtain a membership. Other activities included swimming, fishing, roller skating, boxing, gymnastics, ice skating, and sledding. Most of the informants gave a listing of recreational activities they recalled participating in while living in Buxton.

The most outstanding sports activity in the community was created at the Buxton Wonders baseball games, admittedly one of the best semi-pro baseball teams in the region.

Keep in mind that Buxton was a coal mining community, but it had activities that were akin to those that would be found in the most established communities across the country. This shows that Buxton's recreational range was unusual for coal mining communities. The high level of recreational activity and the involvement by spectators and participants also implied that there was a general level of prosperity in this community that allowed time for residents to participate in recreational activities rather than work. This signified that there was a wide range of interests of the citizens and that some of those interests could be classified as "middle class" (tennis, gymnastics, ice skating). The YMCA was an instrumental force in exposing men and women to new ideas in the community.

Recreational activities were open to all who wanted to participate. Therefore, there are no strong elements of status reported in this section. Recreation in the Buxton community was not highly stratified. The size of the community was perhaps a factor that reduced stratification, such as would exist in a large city.

Church Activities

The responses of informants in the 1980-81 interviews did not support the idea that one's status in the community influenced status in the church or that church status influenced community status. Most of the information was a listing of the churches their families attended and the frequency of their visitations. The accounts from *The Iowa State Bystander* are somewhat different in that they focused on the pastor's position, primarily because of his leadership responsibilities in the church. In the account that follows, the pastor is distinguished by the size of his church, any special talents, and his potential for progress.

There are three colored churches and two white. Rev. F. B. Woodward has charge of Zion Baptist, the largest in the town. He is a very able, progressive minister. Rev. J. L. Wharton is the new minister at the A.M.E. church. He is an eloquent pulpit orator, a young man who if he will can become a strong minister. Rev. C. H. Mendenhall formerly of Zion Baptist, is now at the Second Baptist or St. James Baptist. (Dec. 27, 1912, n.p.)

It is interesting to note that in this account the minister with the largest congregation is highlighted first and the Rev. Mendenhall who was at the largest church at one time is

listed last (He had resigned his position at Mt. Zion for a position at Topeka, Kansas which probably did not materialize). This may or may not be related to the pastor's status and the church's status in the community.

Some newspaper accounts highlighted material things owned by the church, such as a pump organ, a baptismal pool, a piano, electric lights, reupholstered pews, and fundraising activities. The churches that were doing the most in these areas were often written about in the paper.

Community Leaders

As stated previously, Buxton had a number of social clubs and benevolent organizations. Each club and organization recruited men and women who were leaders. The next section will explore leadership in the Buxton community.

1980-81 Interviews

The Iowa State Bystander focused on wealth and accomplishments of individuals when highlighting them as community leaders. The 1980-81 interviews revealed similar factors as former Buxtonites considered who were the leaders of the community. The same people who were highlighted in *The Iowa State Bystander* were featured in the 1980-81 interviews: B. F. Cooper, Reuben Gaines, The Londons, Dr. E. A. Carter, Hobe Armstrong, and Attorney George Woodson. There was one addition - teachers. The women of the community received recognition through their teaching roles. Informants said basically the same thing as *The Iowa State Bystander* regarding the wealth, education and business position of people listed above. However, they revered the teachers and saw them as community leaders for different reasons. Teachers were viewed as leaders simply because of their dedication to their work. They were the leaders of education; education was often viewed as a means by which most African Americans would better their economic, political, cultural, and social circumstances. Jeanette Adams wrote, "The teachers were wonderful. To me what I can remember was wonderful. Especially one teacher I can remember, Miss Lola Hart. She used to come out to our farm on Sundays" (Adams, 1980). Another informant talked about the focus on learning that was the foundation of the school system and the impact that teachers had on that philosophy.

You learnedbuddy. It's so... it's as much difference from those schools down there and the ones they're going to now as it is from night and day. Buddy, you learnt there you'd believe it. Here they pass you just to get you out of one grade into another. Down there they didn't do that. You stayed there until the seat got too small for you to sit in. And you could believe it. Miss London, Miss Dimitri, Miss Golds, Mrs. Baxter. Buddy, let me tell you something you stayed there, until you learned. The didn't pass you because you got too big for the seat. They sat you on the bench and you still stayed in the same class.... If you was in the fifth grade, you knowed everything that you could learn in the fifth grade. (Buford, 1980)

Although the salary for teachers was not very high (approximately \$100 a month), teachers were held in high regard in Buxton and considered community leaders (Schwieder et al., 1987).

1994 Interviews

Quentin Meece and his family moved to Buxton around 1899, when the railroad company was recruiting Negroes from Virginia to work in the mines. As a young man Quentin's father and uncle came to the mines and while there, became acquainted with John L. Lewis, the nationally known union organizer and president of the United Mine Workers. Quentin Meece's father became a union official and worked very closely with Mr. Lewis to unionize the coal mines in Buxton. This initially gives some idea of the status level of the Meece family. They were upper status in the Buxton community and their civic and political involvement in the community underscored their distinction as community leaders. His father was very active with the union and in promoting its merit to Negro miners who had ironically come to Buxton as strike breakers. The elder Meece very early realized the benefits of "organization" to blacks in coal mining communities and played an instrumental role in the coordination of the Negro union effort in Buxton. He became an employee of the United Mine Workers and worked not only in Buxton, but also throughout the midwest in Iowa, Missouri, and southern Illinois. After becoming a union representative, Mr. Meece was elected justice of the peace in the Buxton community which put him in a mediating position for union and non-union interests (See Appendix A.b).

Quentin Meece's father was chairman of the board at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the largest Baptist church in Buxton. He was president of the Board at the YMCA, for many years. He was an exceptional community leader, as his son asserted (See Appendix A.b).

He was brought there with the young men from Virginia for that purpose (to work in the mines). Well he worked in the mines for some several years or more and then I guess he felt that the future of those miners was organization he was an organization man, anyway because as evidence of that his work in the church, YMCA, ...oh, yes, he was a 32nd, 33rd degree mason and he worked at his masonry....he was a very ardent mason, knight's templar, a shriner, right on up to a ...(See Appendix A.b).

Community involvement and, to some extent, "leadership" involvement in different organizations was encouraged by members of the Jones and Wilson families. The fact that these two families intermarried may have impacted the political and civic involvement in the Buxton community. Sue Williams talked about an aunt who was very active with the Eastern Stars and the National Association of Colored Women. Because of her influential positions, she always encouraged other organizational women to place Sue in key positions with their organizations (See Appendix A.f).

The grandfathers of these two families had very strong political involvement. As a teen, Sue was allowed to vote in an election because of the reputation of her grandfathers. Sue's paternal grandfather was also active in politics and a devout member of the "Blue Moose party." He served as a representative to the party from Montgomery county and on at least one occasion he was invited to Washington, D. C. as a party representative. Sue stated that both sides of her family were involved in most of the "worthwhile" activities that took place in Buxton. She had an uncle who was a justice of the peace. Sue remembered her relatives as leaders in the community. She was very adamant that both sides of her family were very involved civically and politically (See Appendix A.f).

The Iowa State Bystander

There are many factors that determine status within a community. Community leadership is one of the criteria used to assign status. The Iowa State Bystander, on a weekly basis, highlighted those individuals who were the outstanding leaders of the Buxton

community. Several names continued to surface week after week, including B. F. Cooper. Reuben Gaines, Dr. E. A. Carter, George Woodson, and Hobe Armstrong. There were several elements working in the lives of each of these people that marked them as leaders in the community.

Attorney George Woodson was on the list and the following excerpt explained to some extent why he was included. This excerpt was written by *Bystander* editor, John E. Thompson.

..he recently enlarged his law office by adding another room called the reception room or waiting room for his clients; he has a lucrative practice he (sic) is without doubt the best lawyer of our race in Iowa or middle west ; his friends are talking (of) presenting his name as a candidate for the legislation from Monroe county; we hope that Mr. Woodson may not only be nominated but elected by the republicans of old Monroe county. Lawyer Geo H. Woodson owns several valuable pieces of farm land in the city limits. (November 10, 1911)

I assessed from this account that owning a business or real estate was important in assigning leadership. Affiliation with political parties and efforts for them was also a factor. Knowing the editor of The Iowa State Bystander was also a factor in the amount of press that George Woodson received. Other accounts mentioned that he owned an automobile and that he was doing well in his law practice.

Mr. Geo. H. Woodson has a branch office here. He is doing a fine business. He has a nice office in the Northwest part of the city, where he has a large law library. Ye Editor enjoyed an excellent breakfast Sunday morning with Mr. Woodson, cooked by an expert, Mrs. Ashby (December 31, 1909).

Based on these accounts, Attorney Woodson was a successful and established professional with political aspirations. He also had a law office in Des Moines which broadened his fame in the region. All of these factors support that he was a leader and had distinct status in the community.

B. F. Cooper owned several businesses in Buxton, including a drug store. He was considered one of the most eligible and wealthiest bachelors in the state. All reports support that he was a well-liked person who did not forget others as he prospered, including the local church to which he made a sizable contribution as noted by one *The Iowa State Bystander*

staff writer. One of the suburbs of Buxton was named Coopertown, after him. He was treasurer in 1907 of the Iowa Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World.

The Londons were an outstanding family of Buxton. This was the only account that gave recognition to a Buxton woman and her accomplishments. It is, however, seated in the accomplishments of the men of the family. Mr. W. H. London owned a nice farm and also owned a business that sold organs, pianos, insurance, and hats. His wife Minnie London was a principal at one of the public schools (*The Iowa State Bystander*, November 10, 1911). They had a son who attended school at Iowa City to study medicine and who later became a doctor. The London businesses were described as strong and good. The status of this family lies in their ownership in their land, other businesses, and the professional positions held by family members. They were perceived as leaders in the community for those reasons.

Dr. E. A. Carter was very well respected in the Buxton community. He was employed by the Consolidation Coal Company. The Carter family was involved in hosting a number of noted people who visited Buxton. Dr. Carter and his wife hosted Madame C. J. Walker when she visited Buxton. The Carters enjoyed entertaining in their beautiful home on Second Street. Dr. Carter's background story appeared in *The Iowa State Bystander* and provided additional information about the outstanding young man.

Born to ex-slave parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chas N. Carter in Charlottesville, Va April 11, 1881. He came west to Muchakinock in 1882 where his father became a miner and resided till that coal camp was worked. The subject of the sketch received early education in public schools of Muchakinock finishing in..... His parents were anxious that he receive further education so he entered Oskaloosa High School and finished with honors..... He entered the State University,..... received what assistance from home his father could afford but was compelled to earn the greater part of his expenses which he did by waiting table at hotels and firing furnaces; always ranked high in his classes. After finishing a collegiate course in and receiving B.Ph. entered Medical College in.....and was graduated one of the best students in a class of 55. Only one student in 55 passed the state board with a better mark. He was employed by Dr. J. S. Henderson an assistant physician and surgeon for Buxton Mining Colony and assistant to local surgeon for C & N. W. Ry at Buxton. During the four months of practice Dr. Carter has enjoyed a large and growing practice. He is without doubt one of the best equipped young colored physicians in the West and we predict for young Carter success.

There are examples of leadership potential in Dr. Carter's life. He was the grandson of slaves and rose to the highest ranks in the professions by becoming a doctor. He was verifiably smart as proven by his performance in academic coursework and the passing of his state boards with a very high ranking. After graduation from medical school, he was employed with a national railroad company as a physician (a company man) and established a practice in the Buxton community. He was a community leader. He was viewed as "ok," though a company man, because he grew up in the Muchakinock and Buxton communities. He was one of their own.

Reuben Gaines was also a wealthy Buxton businessman as reported by John E. Thompson. He owned the "Hotel Buxton" which was valued at approximately \$10,000. Mr. Gaines also owned acres of land in the city and he owned a very fine automobile. His leadership was exemplified in his business ventures (pool hall, shoe shop, hotel) in the community that had helped him to become a prosperous man. There was also a suburb of Buxton named Gainesville for him. The editor, Mr. Thompson, speculated that he had an income of over \$200 a month, a considerable amount for the 1900s.

The Euro-American Perspective

1980-81 Interviews

I thought it would be interesting to investigate a different perspective on the lives of African Americans in Buxton. I sorted and entered data from white informants who participated in the research project conducted by Dorothy Schwieder et al. in 1980-81 which revealed interesting facts about the perceptions that white people had about black people in the Buxton community. It is interesting that much of what the black informants stated about Buxton was supported by white informants who were former residents of the community. Their comments give insight into what factor whites considered in assigning status to blacks in the community.

Ownership

Ownership was a recurring theme in assignment of status from the white perspective. One informant stated the following about Hobe Armstrong, one of Buxton's most notable citizens.

He started in buying farms too. Oh, he had quite a few. I don't know where them houses come from but over there close to where he lived he had several houses that he rented and then he started in buying these farms about every year he'd buy another farm, kept doing that....and I wouldn't have any idea how many farms he had when he died, he had a lot of them".....(Smith, 1981).

I think he had 16, 17, 18 farms, something like that. He invested his money.... (he owned) the butcher shop and he had the slaughter house. He bought the pigs and hogs around this neighborhood.....he donated to all the churches...you could depend on him. He had the check-off in town and then he had the check-off on his meat wagon, too. It was check-off just like a credit card. (He was the only merchant in town who had the company store check-off). (Kietzman, 1980)

To this informant, Hobe Armstrong had several features that were evidence of significant status in the community. 1) He owned things (farms, businesses, cattle). 2) He had money and he knew how to make more money. 3) He gave away money to deserving community institutions. 4) He could negotiate deals with leaders of the community to make a profitable opportunity for himself. Ownership, wealth, philanthropic activity and influence with other community leaders all served as indicators for this gentleman that Armstrong was a man of significant influence and status in the Buxton community. Similar comments were made about Harold Reasby.

Oh, man he (Reasby) made a fortune, he had a little place there by god wasn't oh about half big as this room and had a little window and he sold hotdogs, them little recruit cigarettes and pop and stuff like that That man made a fortune out of that little 2 by 4 shack there (Onder, 1981).

Here, too, ownership was a factor in determining status. It was significant to own a business no matter how small or what condition it was in. What was important was to own it and to make money from it. By this informant's admission, this business was just a little shack but the goods that were sold created a fortune. This showed much ingenuity and business savvy on the owner's part. It was evident that he knew how to make the most income from smallest investment. This was the mark of a shrewd businessman.

Clothing and appearance was another component of ownership used to assign status in the community. Even the whites in the Buxton community acknowledged that the blacks in Buxton had a flair for clothing. One informant recalled:

Oh, they used to dress. Most of them colored guys boy they really dressed That's no kidding. What he see, he was working, makes no difference how much, he'd buy it at the store, they'd have their regular clothing place, had the hardware place and anything you wanted, big department stores and they bought the best. They really dressed, I'm not kidding (Robinson, 1981).

Yeah, they could get anything they wanted mostly at that company store. A suit of clothes you could get them there, anything. Some of them dressed really nice (Robinson, 1981).

This excerpt provides some idea about how whites perceived blacks in relation to ownership - clothing in this case. This man's perception was "blacks buy the best clothing no matter what the cost or debt incurred." From his position clothing was a major component of the black man's budget and, to some extent, burden. The implication was that the value system of the black family focused on attaining a fine appearance through clothing and grooming. There is also some evidence that fine clothing was easily accessible in Buxton. The miners had the money and the goods were available.

It wasn't no occasions, only Saturday night they have a dance and, but they dressed right along to go downtown to the YMCA and down to the company store when the miners didn't work. Yeah, they dressed well... Yeah, suits and ties and hats....(Robinson, 1981).

Yeah, they wore better clothes than I wore to the mine. On an idle day everyone would dress up and hang out on the company porch...(Buford, June, 1980).

Again, the implication here is that black people dressed up for no reason at all and that dressing well was an integral part of their value system. Having a special event or activity to go to show off fine clothing was not a necessity. Conspicuous consumption was probably the motivating factor in these situations.

They dressed well and their mouth was full of gold, gold teeth. They were great ones. Oh, man I remember that and I remember how they loved to dress you know and the women have beautiful dress. Yes, that and their fine clothes. They were great ones. that store would bring all those kinds of clothes from the east you

know. They had buyers. They sure would sell them. Well, they could, they was paid in gold. Oh yeah, we had the white women that was real nice, they dressed well too. Well, there was businessmen there you know and besides the working men's wife they had money too. (Lenger, 1981)

The classic example of conspicuous consumption was to have gold teeth. Just opening the mouth would validate a person's economic condition and status in the community. The black people of Buxton were fine dressers. It is validated by those who would be least likely to notice; those who lived in a time an era in which whites felt that blacks should be ignored - the white people of the community.

Lineage

The significance of lineage was important to white informants in that they tended to give much detail about the circumstances of Hobe Armstrong who married a white woman.

He went down and got these negroes (sic) I was telling you about to break the strike....He never did belong to no union. He come from in the sticks there and married white woman around Oskaloosa then. (Goodwin, 1980)

Well, he wasn't exactly black but colored now I don't know. I had a cousin who lived right beside of Hobe Armstrong in Kansas.... this doctor was Hobe's grandfather my cousin tells me, then his daughter was a white woman and Hobe's father was part colored. He took care of Hobe's horses. This doctor he was well-off and he had a big stable of horses there and Hobe's dad took care of them.... (Lewis, 1981)

He was part colored you know and I remember them and one of his daughters was friend of mine, Mrs. Kietzman. She married a white man.... Yes she (his wife) was white woman but they didn't marry any of the colored people and they had this daughter of his you could tell she was colored, you'd just look at her and tell it, she wasn't really dark but then she just had that look about her and her hair give her away a little bit but they didn't claim colored but she had one daughter that was you would never know that there was any colored blood about her but the other daughter she used to say that she was, I don't know whether I ought to say it or not, she used to say that she was a little nigger..... He (Hobe) was well off. He was about the wealthiest person there was around there. (Allison, 1981)

You wouldn't know they were colored people. The old man, Hobe, old Hobe they called him. He married a woman over there in Oskaloosa and she was all white. Everyone of his children.... married white people. Well, Lottie, her daughter.

she was the oldest. She married, she was the big shot in the bank and the company store, she was the big shot in there. (Allison, 1981)

We went to country school, it was on the Armstrong farm and we lived next door so we went. I went to school with Art and Nettie and Emery Armstrong. They weren't black. Their mother was white. Their girls all married in white people and Mr. Armstrong, Hobe he was only half breed. He was fathered by a white owner of the slaves and that's how come he was half white. You couldn't find a nicer man than he was. (Olsasky, 1981)

In this particular situation there was evidence of white lineage and, therefore, many white informants, when asked about Hobe Armstrong, immediately recalled that he was married to a white woman and all of his children married whites. This is stated as the reason why he achieved such success in the community. He was, of course, not a full blooded black man. Each informant acknowledged the wealth of this man and the respect he held in the community. Though this was admitted grudgingly by some, the fact was indisputable. People knew that Hobe Armstrong was a wealthy man. Though interracial marriage was uncommon, it was acknowledged as probably one of the reasons he was so successful. Most informants were reluctant to give the credits of his success to a full blooded black man. They reasoned that his success was because of his white lineage and invariably saw it as an excuse for his attainment of wealth and his choice of a marriage partner.

Examining Buxton from the perspective of the white population helps to provide a more accurate view of social status in the community. Ownership and lineage were significant factors for assigning status in the community.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS - CLOTHING AND APPEARANCE

Women's Fashions from 1900 to 1920

It is important to examine this period of dress to gain a greater understanding of the people of this era and their motivations regarding clothing and appearance. The next few sections will highlight prevalent fashion features for the fashion period that began in 1900 and ran through 1920. General comments will be made about the fashionability of the clothing worn by former residents of Buxton.

Fashions of this period went through rapid changes in the United States and Europe. There are several periods that can be distinguished during 1900 to 1920.

The Edwardian Period- 1900 - 1908

The Edwardian period occurred between 1900 and 1908. Fashions during the Edwardian era for women emphasized the S-shaped curve. The collars of women's dresses were high with a full pouched bodice. Skirts were tight at the hips and flared into a bell shape at the bottom. Dresses were in one piece with a bodice and skirt that was generally connected at the waistline. Tailored tops and shirtwaist styles were very popular, as well as frilly, soft fabrics. Clothing was embellished with tucks, embroidery, lace, pleating, and fabric application. Bodices were universal in cut and pattern and hooks and eyes were used for closures. The most common neckline was a high boned collar, although there were some necklines that were square cut, v-shaped or designed with sailor collars. Sleeves were typically close fitting or bishop style. By the second half of this period, the three-quarter length sleeve became popular. Some skirts were gored and tight fitting to the knee and then flared to the hem. Lengths of skirts varied: some had trains and others ended several inches above the ankle. There was much variety in skirts, blouses, and shirtwaists. Other garments for women included tailor-made jackets that varied in length from the waist to below the hip, tea gowns which were frilly and made of soft fabrics and worn in the afternoon, and evening dresses which were similar to daytime dresses but made of more decorative and sheer fabrics and sometimes were sleeveless and trained. Hair styles were full and loose around the face and usually fashioned into a chignon or bun at the back of the head. The pompadour was a very popular style with hair built high on top and sides around the face. Hats were fashioned

on a large scale, some with large brims. Hats were embellished with decorations such as feathers, flowers, and lace. Accessories for clothing included lace and silk parasols, fabric fans, beaded evening bags, and ruffles, boas, ribbons, or cravats worn around the neck. Jewelry included brooches, pendants, necklaces, chains, dog collars and long necklaces (Payne, Winakor, & Farrell-Beck, 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Fashion in the Buxton Community- 1900-1908

Several pictures in the photographic collection reflect that the people of Buxton were fashionable people. "Fashionable" is defined simply as the ability to wear the styles of clothing that are most prevalent for a specific era. The clothing in the photographs (Appendix B, Figures 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 16, 18, and 20) consists of shirtwaists with high collars and skirts. These styles were typical of the era in that they were tight at the hips and flared at the bottom. Some of the shirtwaists and tops were tailored and others were made of frilly, soft fabrics. There were many different styles of shirtwaists, skirts, and dresses in fashion between 1900-1908. Variety was accomplished by embellishing shirtwaists and tops with pleats, lace, embroidery and other decorative designs. The hats worn by Lottie Armstrong and Rose Carter are straw with large brims which were typical styles of hats for this era (See Appendix B, Figures 9 and 20). They were wide-brimmed and often had feathers or other decorative ornaments as accents. Hairstyles were pompadour styles which were sometimes decorated with elaborate hairpins as shown in the photograph of Neet Reeves (See Appendix B, Figure 8). The photographic collection supports that most of the clothing worn by the women of Buxton during 1900-1908 consisted of shirtwaists, skirts, and dresses. Examples of the jewelry worn during this time frame can be seen in the picture of Lottie Armstrong in which she wears a watch pendant, a gold locket, collar pin, and wire-rimmed eye glasses (See Appendix B, Figure 9). The examples are not exemplary of high fashion but provide some evidence that the people of Buxton were conscious of and acquired the most common fashions of the times.

1909 - 1914

During this period straighter lines began to take the place of the popular S-shaped curve of clothing from the Edwardian period. The full bodice disappeared as the waistline

gradually moved upward into an Empire style. Some of the detailing from the Empire period returned also, such as wide lapels and ruffled jabots. Dresses were typically one-piece and skirts and shirtwaists had become classic items of women's wardrobes. The high boned collar eventually disappeared which triggered some controversy and criticism from the clergy and health experts. The clergy thought other necklines were indecent and health experts thought other necklines were unhealthy. For daytime dresses, front button closures were used as they had been in the Edwardian period. A narrow straight skirt was prevalent from 1909 to 1911 but by 1912 a variety of different skirt styles were popular. Many different treatments were used in fashioning skirts; however, they maintained a very narrow circumference around the ankles. This type of skirt was called a "hobble" skirt. Sleeves were tight fitting ending below the elbow or at the wrist. Man-tailored shirtwaists continued to be in fashion and accessorized with neckties and high tight collars. Evening dresses were often fashioned after the Empire style with sheer fabrics layered over heavier fabric. Evening dresses usually had trains; belts, sashes, beading, and fringe were used to decorate. Tailored suits continued to be popular with jackets cut below the hip. Skirts were slit at the side or front. Hair was less bouffant, waved around the face and pulled to the back of the head in a bun (Payne et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Fashion in the Buxton Community 1909-1914

There are several examples of fashions dated between 1909 and 1914 in the photographic collection (Appendix B). The Sears sisters were wearing lingerie dresses dated circa 1911 primarily because of the neckline, sleeve lengths, and hairstyles worn by the sisters. Lingerie dresses were perfect for special social occasions such as teas, club meetings, and church (See Appendix B, Figure 6). In Figure 14, the Jones family children were attired in very fashionable suits and hats. Sue Williams, a former Buxton resident, (Appendix A) verified that her aunts and uncles commonly dressed in the most current fashions and that they owned the clothing. The women are wearing tailored suits and hats with plumes and present a very fashionable silhouette. Figure 15, is a photograph of the older members of the Jones family. The clothing in this photograph can also be dated circa 1911. Neckline treatment, hairstyles, and skirt and blouse styles were used in dating the clothing. The

photograph of Rose Carter (Appendix B, Figure 19) dated circa 1911 shows the change in the collar or neckline that occurred between the early 1900s and 1911. Hairstyles were also tapered to the head and less bouffant than they were earlier in the century.

Wartime Years 1914-1918

There was an appreciable change in the silhouette of women's clothes during the wartime years. The silhouette became wider and the skirts became shorter. The fullness in dresses was achieved by pleats, gathers, and gores. By 1916 the hems of skirts and dresses were typically six inches from the ground. Waistlines were at or above the natural waist and shortened even more by 1917. Daytime dresses were usually one-piece and coat dresses were single or double breasted with a belt or sash at the waist. Necklines were V-shaped as well as square; some had sailor collars. Sleeves were tight and fitted and some tailored suits took on a military look due to the influence of the war. Blouses had standing collars, sleeves and yoke cut into one, and leg-o-mutton sleeves. Sweaters became popular after 1916 and styles usually had no waist and were belted at the hip (Tortora & Eubank, 1989). Evening time wear was like daytime wear. The waistline placement fell slightly higher than the natural waist. Again skirts were full and designed with layers of varying lengths and tiers of ruffles. Evening dresses had short sleeves or very narrow straps and necklines decorated with flesh colored or transparent fabric. Hair was worn cut close to the face; permanent waves were popular, also. Hats were high rather than wide and were smaller. Some had brims and others did not. Veiled hats became popular during this period also (Payne et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Fashion in the Buxton Community 1914-1918

Figure 7 in the photographic collection (Appendix B) provides the only example of clothing worn by Buxton residents during the War years. This photograph of six Buxton teachers has examples of blouses with standing collars, sailor collars, and v-necklines which were all characteristic of the styles of the war years. The teachers also wore their hair close to the face, some with permanent waves.

Post-War Period 1918-1920

A transitional period in dress occurred during the post-war years. Supplies for construction of clothing were more scarce in the war years and consequently the silhouette grew narrower. In 1918 and 1919, the skirt became narrower and had an undefined waistline that created a barrel-shaped silhouette. Hemlines eventually became ankle length again. The chemise dress became popular during this time period. There were no examples of clothing that could be dated circa 1918 in the photographs selected for this study (Payne, et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Men's Fashion from 1900 to 1920

For daytime dress men wore single breasted and double-breasted suits. In the early 1900s suit jackets were cut long and buttoned high. The combination of these two features with small lapels created a barrel-chested effect. During the teens, suit jackets shortened. Suits were typically made of dark colors except for those made specifically for summer wear and made of linen and flannel fabrics. Suit jacket styles included frock coats, morning coats, and lounge or sack suits. Frock coats were worn for formal occasions by elderly men and by those who were considered dignitaries. Morning coats were worn before World War I as suits with matching or contrasting trousers and waistcoats and after war worn exclusively by the upper classes for formal and special occasions. Lounge or sack suits became the common daytime wear for most men during this time period. They were worn for all occasions, even for leisure time wear. Trousers were cut loose around the hips but narrowed at the ankles. Some had cuffs and they were typically not creased. At the turn of the century vests were light colored and did not necessarily match the fabric of the suit. By the teens, men were wearing matching jacket, trousers, and vest (Payne, et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Shirts were worn but visible only at the collar and wrist under the suit jackets and vests. Shirts came in a variety of colors and patterns. The collars of shirts were high and stiff at the first part of the century and gradually decreased in height. Soft and stiff collars were popular throughout this time period. Neckties that were worn with shirts were bow ties, "four-in-hand" ties (standard necktie), and ascots. Sweaters were worn and offered in a

variety of styles - collarless cardigan, V-necked pullovers, and turtleneck (Payne, et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Evening dress included dinner jackets with matching or contrasting trousers or waistcoats. Tailcoats were worn also and were typically double-breasted and worn unbuttoned. Dinner jackets were single breasted. The lapels of evening jackets were usually faced with silk. The trousers that were worn with these jackets had no cuffs, had braid placed along the outer seams, and were made of the same fabric as the jacket. Shirts for evening had stand up collars and were worn with white bow ties. After 1915, black ties gained greater acceptance and were used more for evening wear (Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Sportswear gained increased importance during this time period. Men wore jackets with unmatched trousers as they participated in tennis, yachting, or other sports. This was the antecedent to the sports jacket. The Norfolk jacket, which was an English style belted jacket, was worn while playing golf, bicycling, and hiking. Knickers were sometimes worn with the sports jacket. Hair for men was short and little if any facial hair was worn. Many varieties of hats were worn including homburgs, derbies, Stetsons, and caps for leisure. During the summer men sported panama straw hats, and linen hats shaped into derby or fedora like styles. Jewelry was limited to tiepins, shirt studs, rings, and cuff links. Wristwatches were popular also (Payne, et al., 1992; Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Men's fashions in the Buxton community

The Buxton photographic collection has numerous examples of mens' clothing. Based on the examples in the collection, some of the men in the community wore fashionable clothing. In Figure 21, Dr. E. A. Carter is wearing a wing collar which was worn during the first part of the 20th century and a standard necktie. Ed Jones (Figure 13) is wearing a double breasted suit with a soft collar and tie. This gives some indication of the variety in the clothing worn by men. Vests were popular and worn by the men in Figures 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, and 21. In Figure 5, a Norfolk jacket is worn by a young man who is also wearing a Mason's apron. Norfolk jackets were typically worn for sports and recreational activities. Men wore different hat styles. The derby was a very popular style during this period (see Figures 14 and 20). There are examples of sack suits and suits with matching jackets, trousers, and vests

(see Figures 8, 10, 11, 14, and 15). All of these factors support that Buxton men wore and had access to fashionable clothing. Figure 14 provides a view of three elegantly dressed men from the Jones family attired in tailored suits and hats and creating an image of gentility that compares with some of the most privileged classes.

Children's Fashions from 1900 to 1920

It was during this time period that children's clothing moved away from the impractical styles of adults. Clothing production efforts reflected more practical styles and designs for children.

Girls

Girls' dresses were styled after lingerie dresses with a dropped waistline and were light, white, or cream colored. Decorations included embroidery, smocking, and lace. For school, blue serge and sailor dresses and designs were popular. Around 1910, large cape collars were added to dresses and became very popular. Dresses had low waists and sleeves that were tight to the elbow and then full to the shoulder. Pinafores were worn over dresses for protection and manufacturers began to produce more color in dresses. Around 1914 to 1917, belts on girls' dresses dropped low to the thigh. Skirt length was typically to the knee (Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Boys

Between 1900 and 1910, many boys were still wore skirts and dresses until the age of four or five. Between 1910 and 1920, rompers and knickers became popular for small boys. Suit styles included sailor suits, Norfolk jackets, and sack suits. Younger boys wore shorts or knickers with their jackets. Older boys wore long trousers (Tortora & Eubank, 1989).

Fashions for Buxton children

There were a few pictures in the photographic collection of girls and boys. The fashions that girls wore in Buxton were similar to the clothing advertised in *The Delineator* and *Sears and Roebuck Catalog*. In Figure 17, Dorothy Neal Collier is wearing a popular style of the period. The dress she is wearing had a low waist and sleeves that were tight to the elbow and then full to the shoulder. The dress has some similarities to the lingerie dresses that were so popular at the turn of the century. Her brother (Figure 17) is wearing a

suit with a shirt and ascot (see Figure 20, also). The pants appear to be knickers which were very popular for young men (Figure 17 and 20). In Figure 11, the girls are wearing dresses with large caped collars and straw hats. This style became popular around 1910 and appeared sometimes overwhelming on the wearers as you can see in the photograph. Dark stockings were worn with their ensembles.

Boys and girls wore rompers. In Figure 12, Paul Wilson was dressed in a romper for the photograph and looks very much like a girl with the long hair. Common dress for school included skirts and blouses for girls and shirts and knickers or trousers for boys. Girls often wore pinafores over their dresses to protect them (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Clothing - Acquisition and Use

The manner in which a society acquires clothing tells us about the levels of status and affluence in that society. In the interviews conducted in 1980-81 and 1994, the former residents of Buxton had a lot to say about the clothing and appearance in the community. Also, the Buxton Photographic Collection (Appendix B) revealed a great deal about clothing and appearance. The manner in which families acquire clothing reflects their level of social status in the community.

There were several means by which clothing was acquired in the Buxton community. It was purchased from local vendors or retailers, ordered from catalogs, home sewn, refashioned from older clothes, or purchased from a circuit lady (saleslady who traveled from town to town selling home-sewn garments). Hand-me-down clothing was seldom mentioned as a means by which clothing was acquired.

Clothing sources

One of the most prevalent things that has surfaced in this study of clothing and appearance and how it was acquired in the Buxton community has been the variety of resources used to acquire clothing, especially as the socio-economic status of the individual increased. The lower the socio-economic status, the fewer the resources used. At the highest level of the continuum, various elements are incorporated in the selection process to distinguish the dress of the upper echelon from the dress of the lower echelon.

The Meece family provides an example of how one family used a variety of resources for acquiring clothing. Mrs. Meece was a skilled seamstress - a dressmaker - and therefore did quite a bit of sewing for the family. She not only made clothes for Quentin's sister but also made suits for him. He stated:

She made suits for me until maybe I had turned 19. Of course at that time, you wore the knickers. I was gonna say knickerbockers, and I thought maybe there was another name you called them, oh, yes, she used to make them for me, I remember. With all these dresses she was making for the ladies.. and I would always worry cause she was so involved in making those dresses that she wouldn't finish my suit. Yeah, these knickerbocker suits. (See Appendix A.b)

The Meece family also shopped at the Monroe Mercantile Company for clothing and family members also went to Albia for shopping. Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs were standard in their home. There was not a month that went by that they were not ordering something from Sears, Roebuck and that included clothing. There was some "handing down" of clothing, but not a great deal, because of the difference in age between him and his older brothers. He did not remember wearing anything of theirs (See Appendix A.b).

This was a family of considerable stature in the Buxton community. Through a number of entrepreneurial efforts and leadership positions in the community, the Meece family developed a sound upper level status in the community. They were business owners, property owners, and leaders in the community. They had the means to purchase clothing and other items in a variety of ways - which was reflective of a high status level in the community.

The Neal family had a variety of shopping options. They shopped at the Monroe Mercantile Company Store and at Larson's in Sharps End or Coopertown, which were suburbs of Buxton (Collier, 1980, Appendix A.a). These little communities were often named after the businessmen and women who owned the businesses there. Their shopping was not confined to Buxton, however. Mrs. Neal shopped at stores in Albia, also. Dorothy did not think her mother accrued debts at the different shopping establishments. Were the

Neals middle status in the Buxton community? The number of stores that the family patronized suggested that they were. The fact that they did not have charge accounts in these establishments also suggested that they were probably “middle” status. Some of the clothing that Mrs. Neal purchased was acquired through mail-order catalogues. She did not purchase items, however, from Mrs. Vance, the circuit sales lady, primarily because she did not like the quality of her products. Circuit salespeople traveled a planned route to sell their goods to clients they had secured in different towns on their route. She referred to the “Vance” line as “botched up” or “held together with safety pins.” Mrs. Neal made a lot of her own clothing, according to Dorothy.

Sue Williams shared that her family acquired clothing in several ways. Her mother sewed clothing for herself and for the girls of the family. Clothing for the informant’s father and brothers were purchased at the Monroe Mercantile Company. When she went to high school, her mother purchased some clothing for her from Barnes’ Shop, an exclusive clothing establishment in Albia. She remembered wearing Oshkosh overalls as a child, which means some of her clothing items were purchased instead of sewn. She didn’t recall ever wearing hand-me-down clothing (See Appendix A.f).

For those families who had limited financial means, home sewn and remodeled clothes were the primary means of acquiring clothing. Money could not be squandered on items that were far cheaper to produce at home than to purchase through the company store. Items that could not be sewn or remodeled were ordered from the mail order catalogs from Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. The mail order list included stockings, underwear, long johns, overalls, coats, and shoes. Male clothing items were often purchased from the mail order houses. This was related to cost and time for making the garments as opposed to purchasing them. It was also related to the equipment that was necessary to sew heavy-duty materials, such as overall denim. Some machines may not have been sturdy enough to handle the stitching. Night clothes were fashioned from discarded flour sacks made of

muslin and supplied by the local grocer. By necessity, clothing took on a primarily functional use with this group of Buxtonites. Clothing was either home sewn, mail ordered, or remodeled for usage.

Remodeling clothing required precision skills and a hint of creativity on the part of the seamstress. If a seamstress had precise skills and was creative the garment that was created could be worn proudly by the wearer. Unfortunately, creativity and precision skills were not always used in remodeling garments as seen in the following account. The recipient of the remodeled garment in this case was a young school girl who had an acute awareness of the difficult position that was created for her because her family did not have money to purchase school clothing.

You had pretty good skirt, especially if the person was fat. So she'd take that apart and if it was a dress that had big sleeves she'd get more out of it and she would make a dress. She'd just put the material together and make a dress. I remember this hideous purple one and I remember this red one and I didn't even want to go to school. I was an hour late that day. I wasn't feeling good and the dress, just looking at the dress. She said "Oh, you look good in red." Blood red and it was silk, shiny red, red!!! ... This red dress, Oh, my God I hated it. I wore that to school. I remember that purple one. It was beautiful material but it was not the type I wanted to wear to school... And I had on this hideous purple dress that some old woman must have worn and I'm sure she was an old white woman and she must have been at least 65 and it looked good on her.... Here I was nine years old and she made this dress over and put it on me.... If she had had enough money to send in the catalog to get some cotton (dress material) that's what everyone wore, I would have looked like everybody else....I never did say that I didn't want this. I knew there was nothing else. The only way we had any clothes was if her mother sent down something that she could cut and put on us. We didn't have any money. (See Appendix A.e)

The remodeled garments were often made from dresses that older women had discarded and were inappropriate when remodeled for young children. The embarrassment that was created in the young girl who had to wear this creation was painful and long lasting and directly related to the inability of this family to purchase piece goods that were

appropriate for children's clothing. In this case, the remodeled garments were a reflection of poverty, rather than the desire to be frugal or thrifty. The garment also reflected the inadequate skills of the seamstress. This experience resulted in an interesting distinction being made about sewing and dressmaking. From Melba Williams' perspective *dressmaking* was a more prestigious occupation than *sewing* and she knew the difference. *Dressmaking* to her was a "high falutin," "good" profession that required exceptional skill (See Appendix A.e). *Sewing* was, on the other hand, what her mother did. What her mother produced was not indicative of a skilled seamstress. She did not forget the red and purple creations, although the event occurred many years ago.

Small quantities of clothing were also an indicator of financial status in the Buxton community. Clothing, again, was primarily functional which meant that for this family clothing was acquired for basic needs, not for luxury. To own one set of clothing for special occasions and another set for everyday was not uncommon; and that was the breadth of a wardrobe. It was not uncommon for the female members of families to have only two dresses (See Appendix A.d and Appendix A.e). The dresses owned by Melba Williams and Martha Walden when they were children included only one for special occasions and one for "other" activities such as school and work around their houses. Figures 1, 2, and 12 (Appendix B) illustrate how children dressed and what people wore on a daily basis.

Inaccessibility to vendors and retailers was also presented as a barrier for some in acquiring store bought goods. Even if the money had been available, some families who lived in rural areas did not have transportation or time to venture into town to make purchases. Women had the primary responsibility for the home and family while the man was away all day working in the mines. Home sewn goods were the only option for some families for this reason.

The Buxton Photographic Collection - Everyday clothing

Clothing that is worn on an everyday basis can tell us a lot about the lifestyle of a community. Figure 1 is a photograph that was taken around 1900. (*The Delineator*, January 1901 & January, 1903). The women in the picture are wearing shirtwaists and skirts. One shirtwaist has ruffles on the bodice but for the most part the clothing in this photo is very

simple. When I examined the other pictures that had been taken outside of a photographer's studio, I found that the clothing was very basic - shirtwaists and long skirts for everyday activities. Trousers and shirts were worn by men. Jackets were common attire also, along with hats. Clothing reflected the lifestyle and work centeredness of the community. Women were mostly engaged in housework and taking care of the family. Those women who assisted their husbands with tending livestock, farming, and maintaining a garden needed simple and functional clothing. Miners needed clothing that was durable and could stand the heavy duty cleaning required to remove the dirt and grime from the coal mines.

The clothing worn by the children in the Buxton Photographic Collection (Appendix B) reflects that they were in tune with the fashion of the day. The picture (Figure 3) dated circa 1902 (*Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, 1902) of the grammar school class shows that the girls wore pinafores over their dresses; they also wore blouses and skirts that came to the knee. They also wore plain dresses that had natural waistlines and full sleeves that tightened at the wrist. Most of the styles worn by the girls were reflective of the time period prior to 1911. Two girls on the back row who are fourth and fifth from the left and one girl on the front row on the right are wearing pinafores. Two girls on the front row who are first and second from the left are wearing dresses with sleeves full to the elbow then tight to the wrist. The colors of the dresses are mostly white or light colored although there are a few darker prints. Some of the young boys are wearing suits and ties. Others are wearing everyday clothing. There is another important factor that the pictures reveal. The clothing displayed in the photograph reflects varying degrees of status. At least two young men were wearing overalls. Another young man was wearing trousers with suspenders. Most of the others are wearing suits and ties. It is more difficult to differentiate among the girls. The most outstanding garment among the girls is worn by the girl on the third row and left side. The blouse that she is wearing is unlike the clothing worn by other girls in the class. The color and design (mock v-neck with stripes) indicated that the garment may have been remodeled for a younger person's use. It is typical to wear the "best" clothing for school pictures. If the clothing worn in the pictures was the "best" that these children owned, the photograph reveals different levels of status in the community.

Clothing as Adornment

1994 Interviews

Some of the informants recalled a lifestyle in which clothing was used to participate suitably in community activities and social events. For this group, clothing was not only used to meet a basic need but it was used also to draw attention to the wearer. Clothing was a material good used to showcase the person at the social activities.

There was evidence of this in the types of clothing worn to the social events that took place in Buxton and surrounding areas. On numerous occasions, informants remembered fancy dress that was worn at special occasions. For example, Dorothy Neal Collier recalled the clothing her mother wore to different sports and recreational events - events for which the clothing seemed inappropriate (Collier, 1980). At the Buxton Wonders ball games, Mrs. Neal wore big fancy hats with plumes and she hired a surrey from the livery to transport herself and her children to the game. (For an illustration see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 9. Figure 8). This was a sign to Dorothy that her family led a comfortable life. Her mother had money available to purchase "extravagant" clothing items.

Dorothy recalled easily her mother's clothing. She remembered her mother wearing an all-weather coat on a trip to visit her brother, who was band leader for the Ringling Brothers Circus.

When he played around Buxton, mama would rent a car and go to... I can often remember her, she (her mother) had - I guess it's all weather coat..... Call them rain or shine coats that had the belt. And she had a ridin' cap with the fancy ... scarf that went, yeah, scarf that went through down the back and big gloves you know. Yes, those were good times. (Collier, 1980)

She also recalled the manner in which her mother dressed when she went to her father's Buxton Wonders baseball games. She stated:

But... now as far as clothing, the people dressed real well, they were really dressy. You know, 'cause I can think of a dress my mother had, papa played ball, and we'd go to the little towns and she took us kids with her whenever she'd go. and she had a beautiful knit... Oh, I can remember it so plainly, blue dress, and instead of being scalloped at the bottom, it had little tiny heavy silk embroidery squares. And she had blue satin slippers with rosettes on 'em. Oh, I thought she was so pretty with that (Collier, 1980; Appendix A.a).

Mrs. Neal appeared to be a woman of great style. Perhaps it was because she was married to an athlete. She took great care of her appearance as she went out in public. She made it a priority to arrive in style and to dress in style and to always include the children in the experience. She had a somewhat dramatic flair also, in that she hired a livery for transportation to special events and she also owned and wore clothing that made her look "smart." For example, when riding, she wore her riding cap with scarf and of course she had on the right gloves. This made an indelible impression on Dorothy and probably on many of the people in the Buxton community. Figures 17 and 18 show some of the clothing that the Neal family wore.

The numerous benevolent orders in the Buxton community also served as examples of how clothing was used to highlight, adorn, or draw attention to the individual. Quentin Meece, whose parents were involved with the Masons and the Order of the Eastern Star, provided examples of how uniforms were used in these organizations and the impression that they made on him as a child. He remembered that all of the fraternal organizations had regalia that was worn during their turnout. On turnout days the benevolent orders, led by the Buxton Band would parade through the streets of Buxton in full uniform. There was prescribed clothing for each of the benevolent groups. The regalia changed as members advanced in the organization. He remembered the uniform of the Knight's Temple that his father owned.

I remember his Knight's Temple uniform with his plumed hats and long swords and I used to slip in the room and get it out - he'd be gone and my mother would be visiting - and I'd put on that long Prince Albert coat with the sword and pose in the mirror. (See Appendix A.b)

The Eastern Star had the white dresses, uniforms and it had a sash across here.... oh, yeah they had a prescribed way to dress... and they still continue to dress.

The uniforms were designed to draw attention to the individual wearer and made an unforgettable impression on most of the former residents of Buxton (See Appendix A.b).

The Buxton Photographic Collection - Children's clothing

Although children were on the lowest level of status in the Buxton community, there were occasions when they took the center stage of the family. When parents "dressed up" children for special occasions, adornment became a major objective in accomplishing the right effect. Figure 17 is a photograph of Dorothy Neal Collier and her brother. Dorothy is wearing a dress that drops low to the hips or thigh. Her brother is wearing a sack suit. This picture was dated circa 1910 also. (*The Delineator*, 1908, March). In Figure 11 (circa 1912 - 1913) the two young girls seated with George Woodson display good examples of adornment and how the clothing appears to be wearing the girls instead of vice versa. The girls are wearing below-the-knee-length dresses with huge collars with ruffles around the neck. One dress has a big bow in front. The hats with flowers create an overwhelming look for young children. This is "adornment" in the true sense of the word. (*The Iowa State Bystander*, 1912, March 29; *The Delineator*, 1908, March)

Clothing - Elements of Gentility

Focus on quality and appearance

There was evidence of gentility in the 1980-81 and 1994 interviews and in *The Iowa State Bystander*. In the many accounts of what it was like to live in Buxton at the turn of the century, interviewees kept reiterating that the people of this community dressed well. The men and women took great care in the manner in which they dressed and in some instances spent a large portion of their income on clothing. Charles Taylor stated "at that time they'd get a tailor made suit for about \$30, the best" (See Appendix A.c). Tailors were available to make clothing. An article in the November 10, 1911 issue of *The Iowa Bystander* stated that there were three tailors in Buxton. One was African American and the others Euro-American. Informant Dorothy Neal Collier's father, George Neal, was a tailor who operated out of a shop in Buxton. (For illustrations of George Neal's tailor shop see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 10, Figure 9; p. 148, Figure 139) There is no doubt that residents had access to high quality clothing. Even gamblers in their starched overalls and coats impressed Buxton residents with their manner of dress. A number of informants provide some idea of the manner in which people dressed:

They dressed. You wouldn't believe. Men wore silk shirts, the best shoes," Taylor shared (See Appendix A.c).

They were very extravagant. I used to see the men. They would have their watch charms of course. They didn't have too many watch charms, of course, watches with charms. They'd have a \$50 gold piece or something on their very extravagant clothes. The women would dress nice. It was at a time when the women were wearing these hats that you see in the movies with these great big ostrich plumes on them and pay big prices for them and they had their lodges that they would attend, the grand lodges and always go to these conventions. They made money, good money, but they spent it too. She (mother) had three (plumes) on hers and they were \$25 apiece (See Appendix A.a).

I tell you the coal miners used to, in those days those folks really used to, dress and they used to have these fashion clothes and the women used to dress, they really used to dress down there in that coal mine. We lived out in Buxton there and on Monday the women would put on the best they had and parade from Coopertown up to Sharp End (See Appendix A.c).

Charles Taylor had a keen sense for quality in clothing; he correlated quality with cost of clothing and the type of fabric from which garments were made. Several of his comments addressed the quality of clothing that Buxton residents wore. According to his comments Buxton residents exhibited a strong sense of style. He also equated brand names such as Stetson with quality, very much like designer names promote a level of quality that other brands cannot. This is characteristic of those striving for upward mobility in late 20th century American society. In the following paragraph, he talked about the quality of clothing owned by Buxton residents.

Buxton was the best dressed black people in the United States... they wore Stetson hats, mostly \$100 suits for black people in Buxton... Honey, people nowadays sell rags. They ain't got sense enough to buy good material. They wore the best, like Blue Serge and that kinda stuff. (Taylor, 1980; Appendix A.c)

People didn't wear other people's clothes a lot - not a whole lot. (Taylor, 1980)

People in Buxton had some nice clothes. (See Appendix A.c)

The fact that Mr. Taylor was so aware of fashion, style, quality, and cost could demonstrate that he was accustomed to high quality goods. He had some exceptional recall of particular clothing items. For example, he remembered that Buxton residents were accustomed to wearing Stetson hats and blue serge and herringbone suits. He remembered that the clothing was top quality and very fashionable. According to him there was also a monetary limit on quality, "If you didn't have on a \$100 suit you didn't have nothing, hon" (Taylor, 1980).

Mr. Taylor proudly shared that he and his father had their suits tailor-made at the Monroe Mercantile Company Store. He gave a brief description of the procedure he went through to get a suit made. It involved going into the store when the man who came around to measure for tailored suits was there. The man would then send the measurements to the manufacturer who, in this case, had the suit made to order. Mr. Taylor stated that his mother also purchased clothing from the Monroe Mercantile Company. This family loved fine quality clothing and made a considerable investment in their appearance (Taylor, 1980; Appendix A. c).

Sue recalled that her family members were exceptional dressers. She stated that her father purchased a three-quarter length sealskin coat with a marten collar for her mother; she had never seen anything like it. He also bought her the shoes and hat to match the coat. The odd thing to her was that she could not associate owning a seal skin coat and hat with living out on a farm. Sue's father purchased a cedar chest so her mother would have a place to store her coat (See Appendix A.f). In this excerpt is some evidence of the significance of clothing to this family. They were exceptionally well dressed in what appeared to be the latest styles. The fact that the father purchased such an extravagant gift for his wife provides some evidence of his knowledge of fashions. Her father's side of the family were all dressed very well. Figures 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 illustrate clothing worn by this informant's family members.

The genteel image in the Buxton photographic collection

The photographic collection provides some excellent examples of the "genteel image. A few examples of the images and an analysis of the clothing follows.

The Jones family

The clothing worn by members of the Jones family and their Uncle George Woodson, gives excellent examples of the “the genteel image” that individuals can create by following basic standards of dress that communicate gentility. In Figure 10 the Honorable George Woodson is wearing a three piece lounge suit and a shirt with a starched, spread collar and bow tie. (*Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, 1902) The look is distinguished and reflects his position in the community as an attorney and his socio-economic status in the community.

Figures 14 and 15 also present excellent examples of the “genteel image.” Figure 14 is a photograph of the brothers and sisters of the Jones family. Figure 15 is a photograph of the elder Joneses. Figure 14 represents this family as fashionable, distinguished, and economically secure. The tailored suits and fashionable accessories for both men and women create a “genteel image.” This picture was taken circa 1911 and is similar to the fashion plates displayed in *The Delineator* and *The Haberdasher* (*The Delineator*, 1910, February; *The Haberdasher*, 1912, October; *The Iowa State Bystander*, 1912, March, 29). When asked if her relatives owned the clothing worn in the paragraph, she responded “yes” and that they dressed in a similar manner daily. The stance in the photograph of the brothers and sisters also suggests that this is a well-to-do family, which was fashion conscious and distinguished in the community. The stances taken in the picture also suggest that there may have been an element of “conspicuous consumption” exercised among the younger Joneses.

Figure 15 presents a much more conservative image of the Jones family but “gentility” is still evident. The elder Jones women are wearing the standard shirtwaists and long skirts. The length of the skirts implies that the photograph was taken circa 1910 - 1912, perhaps at the same time that Figure 14 was taken. (*The Delineator*, 1911, April; *The Iowa State Bystander*, 1912, March, 29) The clothing worn is very conservative, for the most part, with the men in suits and ties and the women in either dresses or shirtwaists and skirts. According to Gatewood (1990) genteel performance involved acquiring appropriate dress that could not be defined as conspicuous in any way. The photograph of the Jones patriarchy is an excellent example of how this can be accomplished through dress. The stance taken by

everyone in the photograph --heads up and proud-- creates a severe distinction unlike any others in the photographic collection.

Figure 12 is a photograph of Paul Wilson as a child in a romper. Rompers were worn by boys and girls. Notice the length of Paul's hair. This picture was taken circa 1910. (*The Delineator*, 1909, February) Paul Wilson was the uncle of Sue Williams through a previous marriage.

Figure 13 is a photograph of Ed Jones and Figure 16 is a photograph of Ed Jones and his family circa 1905 and 1901, respectively (*The Iowa State Bystander*, 1905, February; *The Delineator*, 1901, January; 1903, January). Figure 13 is a photograph of Ed Jones taken circa 1905. He is wearing a double breasted suit that does not have the tailored effect of the clothing displayed in Figure 14, but has tailored features. (*The Delineator*, 1910, February; *The Haberdasher*, 1912, October; *The Iowa State Bystander*, 1912, March, 29) Again, the pose created for the photograph, along with his very manicured mustache and hair, creates the image of "distinction" for which his family was known. The Jones family photograph (Figure 16) displays Sue Williams' family in their "best" clothing posing for the photograph. The picture was taken circa 1900 - 1908 and shows the young boys in shirts with bowties, knickers, and hats. The girls are in white or light-colored dresses. Ed Jones has on trousers, shirt, and tie. Sue's mother has on a dress with a long skirt.

Other Families - Photographic Collection

Figure 8 is a photograph (circa 1911) of Neet and Payton Reaves. Neet Reave's attire appears to be of an earlier style than the clothing worn by her husband, Payton. Her hairstyle, high collar and gored skirt are reflective of the styles of the early 1900s. (*The Delineator*, 1901, January; 1903, January) Payton's clothing is very much like the men's fashions of 1908 - 1912 (*The Delineator*, 1908, February). Nonetheless, the image that this couple presents is one of "gentility." Neet's pompadour hairstyle with hair comb, gloves, skirt, and shirt waist present a refined image. Payton's vested suit, shirt, and tie also help to present this image. "Gentility" is not related to clothing's fashionability, but to its quality and how it is worn.

Figure 6 is a photograph of the Sears sisters. The Sears sisters are wearing lingerie dresses. Lingerie dresses were appropriate for many different occasions. They were a necessity for every wardrobe. The dresses are accented with lace and ruffles. The Sears sisters top their fashions off with straw hats. Their accessories included a little purse, a locket necklace, bracelets, and rings. This photograph was dated circa 1912. (*The Delineator*, 1911, February) Such lingerie dresses went through several fashion changes beginning with a high collar and long sleeves and eventually giving way to lower necklines and three quarter length sleeve. Gentility is conveyed by the quality of the clothing and by the manner in which the clothing was accessorized.

Figure 9 is a photograph of Lottie Armstrong Baxter, the daughter of Hobe Armstrong. The photograph was taken in the early 1900s. (*The Delineator*, 1901, January; 1903, January; *Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, 1902) Lottie is wearing a shirtwaist trimmed in lace and a skirt that buttons up the side. Her accessories include dark leather gloves, a lapel watch, and a locket. The whole look is topped off with a large straw hat. This was fashionable attire for just after 1900. Everyone in the community knew the status of this young woman because of the status of her father. Her attire in the photograph creates the image of a "lady." Her accessories provide the added touches so that there is no doubt about her status in the community.

Figure 20 is a photograph (circa 1900) of Dr. E. A. Carter and his family. The three boys are wearing suits and hats. One of the smartest ensembles of the 1900s was a shirtwaist, long skirt, and a straw hat. Mrs. Carter tops this ensemble off with gloves. (*The Delineator*, 1901, January; 1903, January; 1903, August) Dr. Carter is wearing a suit accented with three buttons on the sleeve, a derby hat, and gloves. This is my favorite picture of the collection in that the significance of the woman in this family is very much highlighted in the dress that was worn. The clothing that she wore conveys much about the adventuresome spirit of the woman - a sort of "nouveau conservative" approach to dress. The ensemble is very smart and very much in contrast to the conservative demeanor displayed by her husband in his three piece suit and derby hat. To take the photograph while seated on a log also adds contrast, in that this was one of the most respected families in the

community. This type of casualness also suggested self-assurance that this family had of their secured high status in the community. Others would probably have chosen more prestigious surroundings. The conservative mode of E. A. Carter is again displayed in Figure 21 circa 1902 (*Sears and Roebuck Catalog, 1902*) and Figure 19 circa 1912 (*The Iowa State Bystander, 1912, March 29; The Delineator, 1911*). I don't recall seeing a photograph of Dr. Carter in anything other than professional attire (For another illustration of Dr. Carter in professional attire see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, 175, Figure 156).

Occupational and professional clothing

One type of occupational clothing was the clothing worn by miners to work in the mines. They wore "pit clothes," which typically consisted of overalls and/or work pants and shirts. Pit clothes were used strictly for work and often were cleaned only on an intermittent basis due to the difficulty of washing them. Pit clothes would be worn by middle or more probably lower class people, based on Veblen's (1899) theory of classes. Miners wore pit clothes, but not company men, who were considered management.

My informant Charles Taylor had a keen perception for the differences in workplace dress, and made an interesting comment regarding the difference in the way the mule riders and the motor men dressed. The mule riders were accustomed to wearing old clothes to work. The motormen, according to him, were liable to get up on a motor in a hundred-dollar suit, not because they were job conscious but because they were "stupid," in his opinion. Even in coal mines, at the turn of the century, dress was used to distinguish position. The difference in the dress of the motorman as opposed to the mule rider may have reflected the level of intelligence needed to do the job. A mule rider was behind a mule all day and the complexity of his work only required staying clear of the mule's hind legs. A motorman was responsible for the maintenance of the machines used to incorporate power into the mines.

Figure 7 is a photograph (circa 1915) of Buxton teachers (*The Iowa State Bystander, 1915, March 15*). There was nothing extraordinary in the clothing except that the bodices were very conservative and the hairstyles were plain. As one informant shared they were "clean" looking women. Figures 6, 7, and 21 show examples of professional dress for men.

Clothing - appropriate for the occasion

The dress of the people in Buxton was always memorable to informants in the 1980-81 and 1994 interviews. Charles Taylor and Paul Wilson recalled the manner in which Buxton residents dressed. They remembered that they dressed like people in Chicago. This was in reference to the fashionable attire that he saw on a daily basis (Taylor, 1980; See Appendix A.c and A.g). Members of Paul Wilson's extended family were literally fashion plates and excellent examples of dignified or "genteel" citizens. They "attached importance to proper dress that was conservative in taste and high in quality" (Gatewood, 1990, p. 142). (See Figures 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15).

Sundays and holidays

According Paul Wilson, Sunday and holidays were occasions to really show off fashionable dress (See Appendix A.g). And yet, he felt that the dressing was not done to outdress one another. The motive was not related to conspicuous consumption. The people simply enjoyed looking good. Some dressed though they had nowhere to go. Others attended dances and "dressed accordingly." Only "Sunday clothes" were appropriate for going to church. An element of gentility is to have appropriate clothing for various social events. In order to do this, individuals had to have money budgeted for clothing which would place them above lower status levels. Paul Wilson recalled that

When people went to church they went dignified and dressed accordingly. That's right. I think they called them their "Sunday clothes. (See Appendix A.g)

His family acquired clothing in several ways. His mother had regular visits from a Mrs. Vance who was a circuit sales lady. Vance took her samples from town to town and took orders to have garments made. Perhaps Mrs. Vance developed a higher quality of craftsmanship in the goods she sold to the Wilson family. Mrs. Neal did not rate Mrs. Vance's clothing very highly in terms of quality. His mother also went to shop for clothing and other items in Albia, which was considered the shopping center of the region. He did not remember her shopping at the Monroe Mercantile Company nor did he remember wearing handed down clothing, which may be an indication of the family's financial standing. Again,

there is evidence of a variety of shopping options for clothing which is in most cases indicative of a higher level of status in the community (Appendix A.g).

Church

Church has always been a place where African Americans have exhibited their fashion savvy. "Sunday dress" was represented by a person's best pieces of clothing. As one resident stated, "Everybody was dressed up on holidays and Sunday, went to some kind of affair. There wouldn't be no ragged people in Buxton, no....nothing like that, didn't have to be" (See Appendix A.c). One mother spent a whole night sewing dresses and shirts so her children would have new garments for church on Sunday. Wearing your finest to church was, and continues to be, a custom in African American churches. The Church was also a center for activity in the community. It was the place where special activities took place such as picnics and ice cream socials. Special speakers often used churches as their meeting places. (For an illustration of black churches in the Buxton community see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 37, Figure 27 and p. 44, Figure 29) Community meetings took place in the church and holiday singing and performances were centered there. Each time that the church was entered a particular dress code was required. You didn't just wear any old thing to church.

Uniforms

Uniforms were very important to the sports teams that represented Buxton. The Buxton Wonders were as much noticed for their uniforms as for their excellent playing. (For an illustration of uniforms worn by the Buxton Wonders see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 10, Figure 10). The Buxton Band had uniforms also. Uniforms played a significant role in the function of teams and other organized groups. (For an illustration of uniforms worn by the basketball team, see Gradwohl & Osborn, 1984, p. 81, Figure 63). A baseball team of the Buxton Wonders' caliber deserved uniforms. An excellent band needed an excellent appearance. The fans at these events also invested in looking the part of fans and engaged in conspicuous consumption. Local sports activities provided an opportunity to dress well, Dorothy Neal Collier shares when speaking of her mother and the manner in which she dressed for ball games.

I can remember going to the ball game and mama with her big funny hat on, and these we would wear to the ball game. She had big plumes on and we'd walk down the road and she'd hire a livery. (See Appendix A.a)

Her husband was a member of the Buxton Wonders which may have given her a certain status in the community.

Social activities and club affiliations

Although Buxton was a coal mining town, residents made great efforts to dress for social activities. Buxton had many activities in which residents could participate including skating, movies, bowling, tennis, YMCA activities, dances, horseriding parties, picnics, and ice cream socials. The photographic collection provides some idea of the variety of dress that was worn by residents to social and club affiliation activities.

Figures 2, 4, and 18 are photographs taken at special events in the Buxton community. Figure 2 was taken at an ice cream social at the home of Mrs. J. W. Neeley, one of the most prominent members of the Buxton community. It was dated circa 1900 (*The Delineator*, 1901, January; 1903, January). Mrs. Neeley entertained many of the dignitaries who visited Buxton, including Mrs. Booker T. Washington. The event depicted here may have been associated with one of the women's organizations that was organized in Buxton. The women in the photograph look as if they are dressed alike. They are wearing shirtwaists and skirts or lingerie dresses. Almost all of the garments appear to be white or light colored except for the three women who are wearing dark colors. These women are probably in mourning for a deceased husband or a relative. Mourning apparel helped to distinguish individuals in the community and could be considered as a determinant of marital status. In addition to this factor, Mrs. Rose Warren Carter (Dr. E. A. Carter's wife) and Mrs. Valetta Fields (daughter of Minnie B. London, school principal and business owner) attended this event. There is one feature of the photograph that might imply a difference in status. Some of the participants are wearing ribbons attached to their shirtwaists.

Figure 18 is a photograph of another gathering by women in the Buxton community. The same description that was applicable for Figures 2 and 4 is applicable Figure 18 (*The Delineator*, 1903, January). Most of the women are wearing the same hair style - parted in

the middle and puffed at the side. The only distinguishing factors are the ribbons worn on the bodices and the lady on the front row far left position who appears to be wearing mourning clothes. She was identified as one of the women in Figure 2 who was wearing dark clothing.

There were numerous Masonic orders in Buxton including the Masons, Eastern Stars, and Knights of Pythias. Each order had regalia that was worn during parades (turnouts), meetings, and special ceremonies. The Masons wore decorative aprons and hats; the Eastern Stars wore all white with different colored sashes; and the Knights of Pythias had the plumed hats and swords. The turnout uniforms were worn as requirements of all secret order members and presented quite a wonderful appearance when all were dressed out and parading down the main street of Buxton for special occasions or funerals. On "turn out" days the procession was led by the Buxton Band who looked as fine as any of the Masonic order members in their dress uniforms.

Figure 4 is a photograph of the Order of Eastern Star, one of several benevolent organizations that was established in Buxton. Both males and females were members of the organization. The photograph was taken circa 1903 (*Sears and Roebuck Catalog*, 1902). The members are wearing sashes and banners to connote their membership in the organization. The men wore suits and the women wore skirts that fit tight at the hip and then flared at the bottom, shirtwaists, and dresses. After examining the photograph, the only distinction I noted was the difference in the banner worn by Attorney S. Joe Brown who is approximately center of the group on the first level. Perhaps this distinguishes his leadership in the group; he was at one time the leader of the organization in Buxton. Figure 5 is also a picture (circa 1909) of individuals who are involved with benevolent activities. These two young men are Masons. They are wearing Norfolk jackets, shirts and ties, and the aprons of their Masonic orders (*The Delineator*, 1909, February).

The Buxton Photographic Collection (Appendix B) revealed a great deal about the lifestyle and appearance of the people of Buxton. There were several things, however, that were very clear after examining the collection. First, there was a wide range of socio-economic statuses in Buxton if clothing is used as a determining factor. There were

examples of clothing that was worn by the very poor and the very well-to-do. Second, for the most part Buxtonites were very fashionable people. There were examples of fashionable dress throughout the 23-year period studied. Third, the men and women of the community showed great variety in dress over a 23-year period. This is probably reflective of the availability of more diverse styles that surfaced during this time frame. Many of the examples I used were of conservative people; however, other photos reveal great variety in dress for men. This should be the focus of additional research. Fashion freedom can be associated with economic freedom for black males in particular. Fourth, clothing did help to define status in the community from a photographic perspective.

CHAPTER 6. COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

The lifestyle of Buxton residents was far removed from the lifestyle of the black population that Willard B. Gatewood scrutinized in his book *Aristocrats of Color* (1990). Members of the black bourgeoisie as described by E. Franklin Frazier (1957) were also different from the core population of Buxton. However, both groups had similar thoughts on the issues of life that would make a difference in their present circumstances. Both groups wanted to be treated “right” by the majority race and yet the black aristocrats interpreted “right” as assimilation, whereas Buxtonites for the most part wanted to be treated with respect by the majority race, not taken in as one of them. I would like to examine the similarities and differences between these two groups in the areas that each group viewed as important for attaining status in the community -- education, occupation, leadership/club life, and ownership. And finally, I will discuss genteel performance.

Education

Education to the Buxton resident was important, as it was in the lives of most black elites. It was understood that getting a good education was one of the quickest ways of improving circumstances and creating better opportunities for the race. The manner in which the education was attained was quite different in the two groups.

Education began in the home at a very early age for black elites. The home was the resource by which children acquired “good breeding” through experiencing good manners and proper values. Children were exposed to the arts and classical music; there was usually a piano in the home. They learned to play musical instruments and read the classics typically from a home library of black and white authors. Foreign languages were taught to the children; all of these activities required “higher learning” from the parents. All of these activities were done with the children on a regular basis and usually monitored by the mother of the household to insure that the children were making steady progress. Black elites spent a considerable amount of money to send their offspring to some of the most prestigious institutions in the country. Prior to college they went to boarding or prep schools. Once they entered college it was usually at the most prestigious historically black institutions or

respected predominantly white institutions. Education was thought to be necessary to enter the ranks of the refined and cultured in society and outranked wealth in terms of allowing entry to the highest rungs of black society.

While education in Buxton was important to parents, it was approached quite differently. The Consolidation Coal Company arranged for teachers and facilities to educate Buxton's children through the grammar school years. Although a high school had been built at one time, according to Paul Wilson, it burnt down before any of my informants could graduate. If a child wanted to go on to high school, he or she had to board with someone in a town that had a high school. The closest high school to Buxton was located in Albia. The practice of sending children away from home to school was similar to the practices of black elites who sent their children off to boarding school for quality educations. Sue Williams stated that her brothers dropped her off at the home of a woman who boarded high school students in Albia at the beginning of the week; her brothers returned to pick her up at the end of each week. The woman who owned the boarding house had no responsibility for her boarders' education (See Appendix A.f).

The home of the elite was far more stimulating in terms of learning than the home of the Buxtonites. Accessibility to good books and a library to house them in was unheard of for most miners. There were a few community leaders who may have had collections of books in their homes but this was rare. The YMCA also had books also that could be checked out.

Parents of Buxton children had limited educational backgrounds; therefore, most parents were not in a position to provide the academic support that was available to children of the elite. Most of Buxton parents would have had very basic academic preparation, if any training at all. There was no regimen followed to insure that each child got the instruction necessary to develop a refined demeanor or behavior. Even if a parent had the ability to teach a child the classics, arts, or foreign languages, there was no time in the daily routine of most miner's wives to teach their children. Educational advancement was achieved through the prescribed program of the public school system.

It was a milestone for the children of most coal miners to complete a grammar school education. It was far more exceptional for a child to complete a high school education. It was practically unheard of for a child to complete a college education. Buxtonites took great pride in those individuals who completed college and returned to use their skills in the community where they grew up; Dr. E. A. Carter was an excellent example of this.

Was attaining an education a status criterion for either of these groups? For the black elite attaining an appropriate education in an appropriate setting was important to maintaining or attaining status in the community; and, as stated by Gatewood (1990), there was a correlation between upper class status and educational achievement. The elite also knew that a good education would increase earning potential and solidify position or status in society.

Buxtonites were primarily interested in increasing their opportunities for success when they attended schools. Mothers and fathers encouraged their children to get an education because the opportunity was available -- an opportunity that parents did not have in most cases. Increasing status may have been a factor for some Buxtonites who were aware that increased status was correlated with increased education. Black society in Washington, DC, Boston, or Chicago, operated under this premise on a much grander scale than was the case for Buxton residents.

Occupation

Occupation in a coal mining community offered some variety. The majority of men worked in the mines, except for those people who had individual businesses or professions. It is among these ranks that we see distinctions being made. Individuals who owned their own businesses were mentioned more often as community leaders than those who did not. Individuals who had an education and careers in a profession were mentioned more often than those who simply worked in the mines for a living. There were some differences in the mines between the company men and miners. Company men made more money than the miners and had better living quarters. Evidence of dirt was also a signifier of the occupational hierarchy within a company. Jobs that required "getting dirty" were ranked low in the occupational hierarchy.

According to Charles Taylor, a motorman considered himself higher on the status scale than a mule rider (Taylor, 1980). Teachers were also revered in the Buxton coal mining community due, probably, to their commitment to learning and for the contributions they made towards helping Buxtonites prepare for occupations. There was nothing about what they did that would clearly place them at a higher status, except that they were educated and in the business of educating others. Education was valued in this community. There was a variety of occupations which included miners, professional people, and business owners who managed their businesses in the home and outside of the home. The list of occupations -- doctors, lawyers, teachers, pastors, baker, seamstress, tailor, union representative, and YMCA director -- indicates that there was a variety of jobs in this town. Anytime there is a variety of jobs and positions associated with those jobs, a status system is implied. Occupations were significant also in the life of the black elite in determining status in their communities. The occupation did not make the difference, however; what was important was lifestyle.

Leadership/Club Life

Club life during the 1890s and early 20th century was a primary focus of the life of an aristocrat. There was a club for every cause. There was a distinction in the clubs, however. Anyone of elite status could join some of the clubs and most belonged to organizations that had an elitist bent. Elitist women figured prominently in the establishment of the National Association of Colored Women (Gatewood, 1990).

One of the best known fraternal organizations was Prince Hall Freemasonry. The principles of Prince Hall Freemasonry promoted separatism within the race. The Orders of Masonry were very popular in the Buxton community. In fact, much of the organizational activity that took place in Buxton was centered on the benevolent societies. Although it was not as elitist as other organizations, freemasonry went to great lengths to help its members view themselves as exceptional and ranked above other members of the race. Club life was viewed as necessary to carry out individual responsibilities for "race uplift." Each of the informants I talked with had some connection to the fraternal organizations. Either parents or

relatives belonged the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Eastern Stars, or some other secret order.

Ownership

Ownership and its evolution in society is explained by Veblen (1900) in a concept called "pecuniary emulation." It is defined as an individual's efforts to equal or surpass the wealth of another. It is important to note that the wealth of miners in coal mining towns across the country could not be compared to the wealth of the "black elite" in larger US cities. The economic base of the black elite in larger cities was different from that of coal mining communities. There was a desire in both communities to own material goods. Ownership of items such as cars, houses, land, and clothing has been the focal point in the lives of many black people. The means and resources for attaining wealth were very different in the two communities (coal mining town and larger cities); so rather than discuss ownership patterns of black elites and citizens of Buxton, I will discuss impact of the Consolidation Coal Company on the Buxton community in terms of creating an economic base that made ownership possible. I will also discuss Veblen's theory and its relationship to the concept of "ownership in this community."

When ownership is introduced into a society and the ensuing struggle to attain and acquire wealth surfaces, the results reflect increased efforts by men to equal or surpass the wealth of others. This parallel can be examined from the point of view of the Consolidation Coal Company and miners who worked for them. The analysis will provide some insights into the significant impact that the Consolidation Coal Company had on the social structure of the Buxton community.

It was a natural condition for management of coal mining companies and their employees to be in opposition to one another. When the two forces met on important issues, conflict occurred and affected the efficiency of the company. Some companies tried to affect the outcome of profits and sales by controlling the workers who were responsible for output. In order to annihilate any moves towards "corporate slavery" unions intervened on behalf of the miners. Stalemates on issues led to strikes. The beginning of the Consolidation Coal Company was very much like this scenario. Fortunately, with a change in leadership and a

move to the Buxton community a new philosophy for dealing with workers was implemented and resulted in the development of a social structure unlike that of any other coal mining community in the United States. The Consolidation Coal Company operated under the principles of welfare capitalism and this made the difference. The idea of “ownership” and the struggle to acquire wealth was a major issue for the coal company, but there was an understanding that employees had to be content for the company to achieve those goals. Consequently, the employees were not subjected to the principles of corporate slavery, but they were allowed to work on accumulating their own wealth with the assistance of the company. Miners were paid exceptional wages and had an opportunity to increase hours to increase wages. Many efforts were made by the coal company to improve living conditions for company employees and their families. If I put this in terms of Veblen’s theory, blacks who worked for the Consolidation Coal Company were taken out of a barbarian society (slave class) and given the opportunity to participate in the class struggle to attain supremacy. As a result, the people of the community were focused on establishing for themselves supremacy in ownership, education, and leadership. This idea of supremacy was centered primarily in a desire to acquire added comfort and security, although some sought to distinguish themselves from others in the community.

As mentioned previously, when people in barbarian (slave) societies are released to improve their economic situations and are provided with opportunities that potentially improve status, then the focus for supremacy becomes centered at the community level.

Veblen’s ideas on ownership which focuses on the end result of the process of acquiring goods provides an interesting way of assessing ownership in the Buxton community. Property is viewed as “trophy.” The trophies correlate to successes in society and, in turn, possessions become the primary designators of reputation and esteem in the community. For those Buxtonites who owned land, livestock, real estate, and businesses, these were the trophies of their successes. This group also used articles of clothing to distinguish themselves in the community. For those who could not afford more costly items, clothing became the trophies that assisted them in displaying that they had attained a certain level of comfort and security.

Veblen also focuses on the idea of “putting into evidence” that esteem should be given an individual based on specific aspects of his or her lifestyle. For example, Veblen stated that in order to acquire esteem, wealth and power must be put in evidence. Why? Because esteem is awarded based on evidence. The people of Buxton were far removed from the class of people that Veblen focuses on in his theory of class. However, there are elements of his theory that can be related to class structure in general. The interpretation or analysis of such behavior may be different but still have application for numerous groups. This idea of wealth and power exhibiting evidence can be applied to upper classes in different groups. Though the people of Buxton had little wealth when compared to Veblen’s upper class, they exhibited similar behaviors in acquiring esteem. There had to be evidence of the power and wealth. One person who provided good examples of power and wealth and the esteem associated with it was Hobe Armstrong. Many informants held him in high esteem because of the wealth he accumulated in the community. They associated power with wealth. There was evidence of his power and wealth in his land holdings, his businesses, and his yearly purchase of a car. Armstrong also lived in decent surroundings and was not involved in “menial offices.” Hobe Armstrong “put in evidence” or impressed his importance on others. All of these factors worked together to set him apart as a man of high social status in the Buxton community.

Genteel Performance - The Written Code of Etiquette from a Black Perspective

Genteel behavior can certainly be exemplified in how well one behaves in relation to rules of etiquette. One of the black authorities on etiquette, E. M. Woods, defines it as “the code or book of civilities of polite people in polite society. Polite society was “the association of polite people, - people who treat one another with due courtesy” (Woods, 1899, p. 14). Woods emphasized that acquiring an education was no excuse for a lack of knowledge and good breeding. Good morals were the basis of good breeding. Adhering to rules of etiquette was not the only criterion for being a member of the elite class, but it certainly was important in sorting out those who aspired to be a part of this exclusive group.

Woods covered etiquette for a number of different situations in his book, *The Negro in Etiquette: A Novelty*. The name itself implies that there was an oddity in associating good

manners and breeding with the Negro. After all, the only individuals that were considered by society as a whole to have the potential for refinement were white. In his book Woods acknowledged that anyone could be polite and exhibit elements of wellbred behavior regardless of color and that the basis of this behavior was knowing wrong from right and doing the right. Though acquiring a refined nature is not as simple as he suggests, Woods covered a number of topics on etiquette that assisted the race. E. M. Woods presents a perspective on black genteel performance that gives a vivid picture of how the black race should behave in order to appear "refined."

Refined Behavior

Woods translated practical behavior into a criterion for refinement among blacks. Ladies were not to discuss a person without knowing his or her relationship to the addressee and were not to chew gum in public. Men were to refrain from smoking and chewing inside the church. A hat was to be worn in just the right way so as to not signify a "ruffian." To say that an individual was not using good etiquette was not acceptable and considered impolite. To curl a mustache invited much criticism.

Woods defined good etiquette as the ability to treat one another with due courtesy (1899, p. 14). If this is a valid definition, then many of the residents of Buxton showed some level of refinement. Woods also stated that good morals were the basis of good breeding. This supported that there were some elements of gentility present in the Buxton community. Good morals were viewed as very important for many Buxtonites.

Woods took a different position on refinement. He stated that, "It is impossible for parents, though classical scholars, who were not taught refinement in early life or childhood, to rear offspring of refinement. That which one has not, he cannot impart to another" (p. 87). In making this statement, Woods supported the idea that only the elite in society had the opportunity to incorporate an element of refinement in their lifestyle and behaviors. "Refinement is, indeed, the legitimate offspring of refinement" (p. 87). If this indeed was true, then many of the residents of Buxton would not be considered "refined."

The "genteel performance" is an area the black elites worked on for years and years. It was considered a way of life for many African Americans striving to set themselves apart

from the masses. As I examined more closely what gentility meant in terms of lifestyle, I discovered several things. There were specific aspects of family life that were evident in the lives of “genteel” African Americans. These factors served to distinguish them from the masses. The patterns the black elite established were similar to the lifestyle experienced among white middle and upper classes. Several areas will be highlighted.

Gentility and the nuclear family

The nuclear family with a patriarchal structure was very important to the black aristocrats. The philosophy or rules for family life included the following: Marital stability was important and divorce was not allowed, primarily because of the repercussions it presented for the children; it was in fact undesirable to associate with divorcees. The black elite typically had small families with one or two children.

Fathers were the authority figures in the family. They were also the chief breadwinners of the family. The old aristocrats were usually in service oriented jobs -- tailor, barber, caterer; some were in government and small business. The generations that followed were able to secure positions as lawyers, physicians, and teachers, probably because of the excellent educational training their parents provided.

Mothers and wives, typically, did not work outside of the home. If they worked outside the home they were teachers, lecturers, or writers. Many of these women employed household help but continued to govern all that occurred in their homes -- housework, social and cultural activities, and child rearing. Outside of the home there was involvement with ladies' clubs, church organizations, and other elite societies. Elite blacks kept their family and social life isolated from the rest of the world. They rarely attended “public” events and cringed at the press reports that often made no distinction between “real society” and “upstart nobodies.” According to Edward Wilson, a black attorney from Chicago, there were individuals who without family name, education, refinement, or money thought they should be included in “polite” society (Gatewood, 1990).

Buxtonites who participated in the 1980-81 and 1994 interviews supported some of the points listed above. This does not verify that they would fit into the “genteel” group, but

it does support that genteel thoughts and ideas may not be exclusive to the upper black classes.

There were few references to divorce in the documentation from the interviews, but the importance of the stability of the family is exemplified in the lifestyle of Buxton families. The efforts of the Consolidation Coal Company contributed to strengthening the family unit. Homes were provided by the company to maintain that unit. Employment opportunities for men were available which helped to maintain the family unit. Family values were instilled in the children on a daily basis, so that appropriate lines of authority would be established. All of these factors served to increase the stability of the marriage and the family.

Buxtonites had families of all sizes. There was no clear pattern that would indicate that the size of the family was correlated to upper class status. For example, Hobe Armstrong had five children and was one of the wealthiest men in the town. The Joneses had four children in their family and probably exhibited more elitist characteristics than any of the others in the 1994 interviews.

Some informal training took place in the Buxton home, but for the most part children got their academic education in school and training on basic etiquette and moral behavior at home. There was no indication that there was a significant amount of time spent with children to expose them to the social, cultural, and political aspects of life. Sue Williams and Quentin Meece had some exposure to political activities that impacted their lives; because of the involvement of relatives, this informal training was not a structured activity, as it appeared to be in the homes of aristocrats. There was some control over whom people associated with, as indicated by Sue Williams when she mentioned that her relatives did not associate with "just anyone." They picked their associates very carefully and only socialized with individuals who had accomplishments in the community. There were examples of parents screening the children who were invited to play with their children. All of these factors helped to control who the family had as associates. It did not appear to be an issue of creating a refined atmosphere for most people. It appeared to be done more to preserve the moral fortitude and standing of the family than anything else (See Appendix A.f).

Fathers were for the most part authority figures in the family. They were the breadwinners of the family. Although the women sometimes had businesses, the men were the primary earners for the family. The Consolidation Coal Company made this phenomenon possible. Historically, it had been more difficult for black males to find substantive jobs to support their families. Consequently the women of the household had to hire themselves out for domestic positions. The Consolidation Coal Company provided some stability in this area. There was also a wide range of occupations in Buxton including physicians, lawyers, and businessmen who were mostly males. Men as heads of households and authority figures in the home were supported in the social structure of this coal mining community. Women and children gave much respect to the “man of the house.”

Mothers and wives did not work outside of the homes typically. There were some positions in the community for women, such as teachers and store clerks for the Monroe Mercantile Company. Women had home businesses, which was different from the elite blacks who left the income to the man of the house unless they were teaching, lecturing, or writing. One family mentioned that they hired someone to help around the house. The Jones family hired a lady for several days a week to assist with housework. It was a common practice for upper class families to isolate the family from public life. Hobe Armstrong was very much in control of the interactions of his family with the community. He was very visible but his wife was rarely seen and his children dealt primarily with community people through their businesses. The Jones family, who lived nearby, had some associations with the Armstrongs but that was primarily because they were in the same status group.

Gentility and the home environment

The home was important to black elites, since it was the social center for entertainment and socialization; they were in most cases barred from the most desirable white establishments and so they had to create their own social establishments in their homes. Black elites spent a considerable amount of money acquiring “commodious” housing in “good” neighborhoods. Their homes were well kept, spacious, comfortable, and furnished in good taste. For example, a typical upper class home in Atlanta, Georgia in 1900 was two stories, had seven or eight rooms, was spacious, and had a bathroom (DuBois, 1899b) The

owners of the homes were typically professional people such as teachers, physicians, businessmen, government workers, and attorneys.

Some Buxtonites had homes similar to those of aristocrats in larger cities. Their homes were spacious, well-kept, and served as centers for entertaining. Quentin Meece mentioned the importance of fine furnishings to his mother. Marjorie Brown also stressed the significance of material things in the home to insure a comfortable existence. For black aristocrats material things contributed to their position as elite. For Buxtonites material items established that they had accomplished life goals and objectives. Social entertainment in the home was common particularly when nationally known figures came to Buxton. The home was in many respects the social center of the community along with the church and the YMCA. Although some Buxton community leaders owned spacious and well kept homes, others lived in five or six roomed houses provided by the Consolidation Coal Mining Company.

Gentility in dress and appearance

Dress and appearance was an important factor in gentility also. Appropriate dress for social occasions was required. Good taste in attire for less formal occasions was important also. Azalia Hackley stated in her book *Colored Girl Beautiful (1916)* that dress indicated the character of the wearer. She suggested that black women steer away from any clothing item that could be considered gaudy. What was inappropriate dress? Any clothing style that was exaggerated or could be associated with actresses or boulevard women would be inappropriate attire for a refined woman. Any clothing item that was conspicuous was also deemed inappropriate. Hackley stated, "The exclusive dressers in high society, study to get simple lines; with them severity in line is elegance" (p. 31). The quality of the clothing was important also and Hackley gave these few rules for appropriate dress - a) purchase conservative tailored outfits b) purchase at least one good black dress c) dress in keeping with the occasion d) remember that flamboyant and inappropriate dress is outside the pale of gentility and e) neither one's clothes or laughter should be loud.

There was no question as to whether the people of Buxton dressed well. This fact is reported in the accounts from *The Iowa State Bystander* and the 1994 and 1980-81

interviews. Photos in the photographic collection provide additional support for the appearance of and clothing worn by some of Buxton's most prominent and lesser known citizens.

Gentility and social decorum

Social events and special entertainments were exciting affairs for most of the black elite. It gave them the opportunity to mingle with and socialize with their own peers and perpetuated the idea of castes among African Americans. There were ritualistic activities that black aristocrats participated in on a regular basis. The New Year's calling was an event which took place in New York, in which there was a series of receptions within a 12-hour time frame. During this time, the men from upper status backgrounds visited different receptions and greeted the women of the select group. Participation was by invitation only and designed to separate this "blue vein" group from "upstart nobodies." Between New Year's and the Lenten season, there were continuous activities and social events to participate in for New York's black elites. Each city with aristocratic blacks had activities that set them apart; it was within these forums that they could continuously see the significance of family heritage, skin color, a good education, and wealth. Buxton had social activities in the home on a smaller scale. For those families who made a distinction in those with whom they associated, there were a number of dinners, parties, receptions, club meetings, or entertainments in their homes; this helped to exclude individuals who were clearly not like them. When dignitaries visited the city, special receptions and dinners were held, which only specific people were invited to attend. Social events in Buxton were not as elaborate as some of the events mentioned in Gatewood's (1990) *Aristocrats of Color* but the intent was the same -- to set one's family apart from those of lesser status.

Gentility and Wealth

Wealth, as mentioned previously, was not a prerequisite for becoming a part of genteel society. In fact, flaunting wealth was perceived negatively by the truly genteel. There was a combination of things needed to be considered genteel which included a respected family background, education, and good breeding.

Were there people in Buxton that would have fit into this category? The Jones family would probably fit into this category. They had a respectable family background on the maternal and paternal sides of the family. They had acquired some wealth through ownership in land and real estate. They were educated people -- not above high school, but more educated than some in the Buxton community. Pictures also support that the father's family were very light complexioned and they appeared to have very good taste in clothing also.

Hobe Armstrong and his family would probably have fit in the upper status group also. They were wealthy, and he was obviously a very bright man to have accumulated the wealth he had. They were from an exceptional family background in terms of an elite classification. Hobe Armstrong was multi-racial and his wife was white; and of course they were all light complexioned.

The other commonality that the Jones family and the Armstrong family had with the black elite in other cities was their isolationist attitude. They kept to themselves. They set themselves apart from others and made a conscious choice to associate with certain kinds of people. All of these are indicators that if Buxton had three status groups, then they would both have been placed in the upper status level.

Finally, proper conduct and manners were the most important behaviors for presenting an image of gentility. This was extremely important to the black elite because the single factor that they felt contributed to the negative image of the race were the "vulgarity and crudities" displayed by the black masses in public. To compensate for this overpowering image, the black elite tended to go overboard in terms of behaving with proper decorum. One of the most vivid pictures of the significance of manners was presented in the relationship of parent to child in the Buxton community. Proper decorum meant obeying and treating parents or authority figures with respect. The difference in the behavior for the black elite was that the "genteel behavior" exhibited was for the primary purpose of eliciting acceptance from a larger society that had relegated them to an inferior status. For children, inferior status was a natural position, and therefore, their adherence to proper conduct was

motivated by a fear of physical harm; presenting an air of refinement had nothing to do with exhibiting good manners for children of this era.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

Three objectives were the basis of this research. The first two objectives were to examine social structure and the determinants that defined status in a predominantly black, industry-based community. Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) provides a theoretical framework from which to draw some comparisons and conclusions. Veblen's theory was selected because it incorporates material possessions as a primary factor in determining status of individuals in a community. Buxtonites used material possessions to distinguish between status levels in the Buxton community.

It is interesting to examine Veblen's theory with a focus on the two classes he defines, the barbarian and upper class. What he defines as the barbarian society has similar characteristics to those of a "slave" class. According to Veblen, barbarian societies had no defined leisure class, were small, and were composed of poor, simple, sedentary people. These characteristics applied to slaves, also. A system of ownership was not a part of the slave societies and they could not own land or real estate, unless they were freed. I propose that Buxtonites had roots in a society in which there was probably very little stratification except in the relationship between "house" and "field" slaves.

Veblen's theory also focuses on the impact of industrialization on society. With industrialization came the struggle and jockeying for position within society. Buxton was established 35 years after the Civil War and reflected the industrialization and modernization that was taking place across the United States. It was a thriving city from its beginnings in 1900 and, in accordance with Veblen's theory, blacks improved their economic conditions beyond the subsistence level as they moved into industrial positions. Due to the reasonable wages that Buxtonites received, many community people had the ability to acquire goods for comfort and to create wealth. According to Veblen, what naturally follows in this evolution of society is a struggle for attaining social leadership. Social leaders came forth out of the struggle that developed to establish supremacy in the group or society.

The Buxton community had some prominent leaders who are good examples of this struggle to establish supremacy in the community. The "supremacy" I speak of was anchored in ownership of land and businesses, in educational attainment, or in leadership

activities. Supremacy attained through land and business ownership is reflected in the accounts of the lives of Hobe Armstrong and Reuben Gaines. Educational supremacy is reflected in the accounts of the lives of Dr. E. A. Carter, Attorney George Woodson, and the teachers of the community. Supremacy in leadership roles is reflected in the involvement of all the aforementioned individuals and accounts of leadership positions held by members of the Meece, Wilson, and Jones families interviewed in 1994. All of these examples reveal a key factor about the social structure of the community: attaining a reputation in the community was associated with educational attainment, leadership, and ownership.

Veblen's term "leisure" refers to a non-productive consumption of time. The non-productivity was the key factor because it demonstrated that productive work was unworthy and that an individual could afford a life of idleness. So how could an individual "put in evidence" that esteem should be assigned to him or her although they prevailed in a life of idle living? This could be accomplished by showing some lasting result or product of the time spent in leisure.

We can draw some parallels of this concept in the lives of Buxtonites who were involved in organizational activities. Club organizing was an activity that was conducted in the leisure time of many Buxton residents. There were issues surfacing nationwide that required the attention of black communities across the nation to make a difference. The primary difference in the efforts of Buxton residents and Veblen's constituency was that Buxtonites considered that their work was "productive." There were many efforts towards "racial uplift." What could be more productive? For both groups, the evidence of their labor (real or false) was a tangible product. The tangible products included certificates, awards, or honorary decorations. For those individuals who were in benevolent orders, the paraphernalia and different garb worn was an excellent example of honorary decorations. The Knights of Pythias, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Masons all had uniforms that represented that they were a part of a great effort to "uplift the race." With different offices came additional decorations to make distinctions within the group. Other evidences included elaborate parades in which organizations dressed out and paraded. This was their "putting in evidence" that they deserved esteem.

The Buxton Wonders were literally involved in leisure that was non-productive. Again, to impress their importance on others they had to put in evidence that they deserved to be viewed in high esteem. The material products that provided evidence for the Wonders were their performance and the trophies that were won in competitions. The tangible products or trophies are viewed as marks of exploits and eventually developed into a system of ranks and titles. All of the behaviors associated with providing evidence of importance are indicators that there were different status levels in the Buxton community.

Veblen also addresses the topics of “genteel performance” or as he calls it physical habit and dexterity. Good manners and breeding and proper decorum were required evidences of conspicuous leisure. Veblen also felt that manners exercised in modern industrial communities were yielding generations with under-bred manners, even out of the better classes. Because the code of manners had suffered so in the hands of an industrialized society, Veblen thought that the only place that proper decorum could thrive was under a “regime of status.” Veblen’s thoughts are very much like members of the “black elite” who lamented that proper decorum was being lost in the efforts of the nouveau riche to acquire higher status in the black community. Some of those who were increasing their socio-economic status were doing it while working in industrialized work settings. This was unacceptable to the “old regime.”

The very nature of the Buxton community would imply that there could be no evidence of “genteel performance.” Buxton represented the epitome of manual and industrial labor. Veblen’s aristocracy classified productive work as barbarian and certainly not to be performed by upper classes. In addition, mining was productive work. Involvement in such work was a sure indication of a person’s lower status in society. The majority of the people in Buxton were involved in work with the mines.

Veblen thought that “refined tastes, manners, and habits of life” provided evidence that an individual was from a “genteel” background. Refined behavior and good breeding required time, study, and expense which the working classes did not have. Veblen went on to explain that the courtesy that is exhibited in everyday intercourse is not reflective of the decorum he has proposed in his theory. The courtesies of everyday intercourse are related to

kindness and good will which is not traced back to an individual's reputability to explain its presence or the approval for which it is regarded. For example, anyone can exhibit good manners to express kindness. Only reputable people or people of higher classes can exhibit refined behavior because they understand that in exhibiting the "codes of decorum" in their behavior, they are communicating their status. Veblen's aristocracy clearly saw themselves as superior members in relationships with inferiors or lower classes. It was among the highest class that Veblen thought that decorum could be exercised to its fullest and serve to model proper decorum to the classes beneath. He states, "the code is most obviously a code of status and shows most plainly its incompatibility with all vulgarly productive work" (Veblen, 1899, p. 34). However, there were examples of "genteel performance" in some of the accounts of the life experiences of Buxton residents. Genteel performance was exhibited in dinner parties, balls, and other entertainments hosted by Buxton residents.

The third objective of the study was to investigate whether standards of appearance were used in making status distinctions in Buxton. Veblen's theory related to conspicuous consumption refers to wearing clothing that is obviously expensive to highlight status in the community.

Did clothing play a part in making status distinctions in the community? Yes, clothing was used to make status distinctions in the Buxton community. The use of clothing and appearance to determine status was not used to the extremes that it was used by Veblen's leisure class. However, Buxtonites were involved in efforts to display their wealth on their backs. There was evidence of conspicuous consumption in the dress habits and behavior of Dorothy Neal Collier's mother, Alice Snead Neal. She was fond of hats with plumes and the latest fashion such as motoring jackets and scarves. She "dressed up" for the Buxton Wonder baseball games that her husband played in and she arrived at the games in style with a hired driver. All of these behaviors served to distinguish her and her children from others in the Buxton community. Coal miners also practiced conspicuous consumption. Some miners were accustomed to purchasing \$100 suits, an expensive purchase for this era and for the social activities of a coal mining community. "Conspicuous consumption" did take place in

Buxton; however, the ability of miners to acquire some level of comfort and security for their families was also important.

There are several things that the research revealed about dress and appearance. The first fact of importance involved perception of dress. When most of the informants were asked about how the people in Buxton dressed they replied that they "dressed well." So there evidently was some attentiveness to appearance in this community. "Dressing well" occurred for several reasons. First of all the miners made good money and spent it on fine clothing among other things. Second, the Monroe Mercantile Company made available to miners and their families fashionable clothing through credit. From this I can conclude that there probably were distinctions in dress due to the variety of goods carried by merchandisers and that status distinction, also, may have been reflected in the quality of the clothing worn.

The second fact of importance was related to acquiring clothing. Residents used a variety of ways to acquire clothing. There may be a correlation between the number of ways of acquiring clothing and the differences in the quality of the acquired clothing. Status can be assigned based on the quality of the clothing worn. An example is the incident involving a circuit saleslady who was selling inferior goods. The status or quality of the clothing she produced would be rated lower than items purchased through the *Montgomery Ward Catalog*, in most cases.

The third fact of importance was related to the activities of residents. There was a variety of activities that required a variety of types of clothing including Sunday clothes, uniforms, and sportswear. Status issues are associated with all of these types of clothing. Specific dress was required for church; uniforms were required for the benevolent organizations; and the sports teams required special sports apparel that set them apart. Special dinners, receptions, and entertainments required special attire. Involvement in a variety of activities may have required increased clothing purchases. Greater variety in the wardrobe may require increased income. The financial ability to acquire these items may be a reflection of economic status of a family.

And finally, the fourth fact was that based on the photographic collection. There were detectable distinctions in the way individuals dressed. Some Buxtonites clearly wore a

higher quality of dress than others. A further investigation of the photographic collection of Buxton residents would reveal additional insights about the quality and fashionability of the clothing worn by Buxton residents, and the status of the wearers.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY

As previously stated, the objectives of this dissertation were to examine social structure in a predominantly black, industry-based community; to determine the criteria used in a black community at the turn of the twentieth century to establish levels of status; and to investigate whether standards of appearance were used in making status distinctions in a black coal mining community.

The research methods used included interviews with former residents of the Buxton community, analysis of interviews conducted in 1980-81, examination of photos of former Buxton residents from a photographic collection, census data, and articles from *The Iowa State Bystander*, a newspaper that was targeted to the black community of Iowa. The number of resources allowed me to examine the social structure from many different perspectives and helped to corroborate the findings of the study.

The major findings of the study showed that Buxton was very much like other communities eventhough it was a coal mining town. There appeared to be an upper, middle, and lower class of people in the community. This was exemplified in the jobs, social activities, businesses, and leadership roles in which people of the community were involved. This was exemplified in the role that material possession played, particularly clothing, in determining status in the community. The impact of industry on the lives of black Americans particularly in this community helped to create a social structure that encouraged involvement in entrepreneurial activities. The industrialization of society had the same impact on African Americans as it had on Euro-Americans; it stirred the innate desire to jockey for position within society. The major factors that helped Buxton residents to determine status supports this statement. Among the factors that determined status in the community were "leadership" in the community, educational attainment, genteel performance, and "ownership," which appeared to be the most important factor of all.

Leadership abilities were exhibited by a number of Buxton residents. Some Buxton residents played significant roles in the leadership of the community which included the development of businesses, operation of a professional firms and businesses, and involvement in the union and management of the Consolidation Coal Company.

Educational attainment was an important factor also in determining status in the community. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals lived in the Buxton community. These individuals were held in high esteem by many people of the community. The teachers of the community were also remembered as excellent educators and significant leaders due to their educational accomplishments and their abilities to teach others. Some residents understood the significance of educational attainment so well that they sent their children away to complete high school in other communities. This was not common. Many miner's children began to work in the mines at very early ages. Attaining an education was secondary to making money to support the family. However, those who attained an education were set apart from those who had not.

As stated previously, the very nature of the Buxton community would imply that there could be no evidence of "genteel performance." Genteel performance in the Buxton community was different from genteel performance among the "black elite" of Boston quite simply because the economic resources of the black community of Buxton and of Boston were vastly different. However, there was some level of "gentility" in the Buxton community as evidenced by the dinner parties and other formal gatherings hosted by some of the "top" citizens of the community. The "elite" of the community often hosted dignitaries who visited the community. The ability to host dignitaries required a certain level of social decorum so as not to embarrass the whole community. "Genteel performance" was a factor but it was not as important as ownership in determining status in the Buxton community.

Ownership was the most significant factor in determining status. People who owned businesses, property and other material possessions in the Buxton community were remembered more readily by interviewees than others. Several members of the community were recalled in many of the interviews and the comments were very often related to the "ownership" or "wealth" each had acquired in the community. Ownership of clothing was also a factor that determined status for some of the interviewees. Many recalled the quality and fashionability of the clothing worn by some of the residents of Buxton.

It is interesting to note that many of the men and women who had status in this community had a combination of the factors mentioned above. Many of them owned

property, were educated, and had leadership roles in the community that required a level of social decorum. All of these factors created a social status hierarchy in the Buxton coal mining community that was very similar to other communities across the United States in the 1900s.

The last objective was to determine if appearance was used to make social status distinctions in the community. Buxton was a community of many resources and social activities. Add to this fact the excellent wages that many miners made and you create the potential for some to use clothing to make themselves distinct in the community. There was some evidence of “conspicuous consumption” in this community. There were many opportunities to make distinction in dress in the community. Social activities included musicals, church services, plays and other entertainment, and sports activities. There were numerous social and sports clubs that required specific uniforms that were designed to make distinctions. Different fraternal orders also required distinct clothing. Clothing worn for different jobs in the community also made distinctions. Company men wore different clothing from the miners. Clothing was definitely used to make status distinctions in the Buxton community.

What are the implications? Buxton was a community that had a very clear social structure. Although it was a transient community it was unique in that many of its residents experienced a quality of life that was uncommon in most coal mining towns across the country in the early 1900s. There are several elements that work together to create the environment that allowed Buxton residents to thrive - a supportive industry that provided equal pay for equal work; a community which supported business endeavors, social activities that required involvement from the community, and resources that allowed for choices particularly related to selection of clothing and other material goods. These same elements are necessary today to help black communities thrive.

APPENDIX A: 1994 INTERVIEWS

- a. Beavers, M. (1994a, Summer) Interview with Dorothy Collier, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- b. Beavers, M. (1994b, Winter) Interview with Quentin Meece, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- c. Beavers, M. (1994c, Summer). Interview with Charles Taylor, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- d. Beavers, M. (1994d, Summer). Interview with Martha Walden, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- e. Beavers, M. (1994e, Summer). Interview with Melba Williams, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- f. Beavers, M. (1994f, Summer). Interview with Sue Williams, former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.
- g. Beavers, M. (1994g, Summer). Interview with Paul Wilson. former resident of Buxton. Des Moines, Iowa.

APPENDIX B: THE BUXTON PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

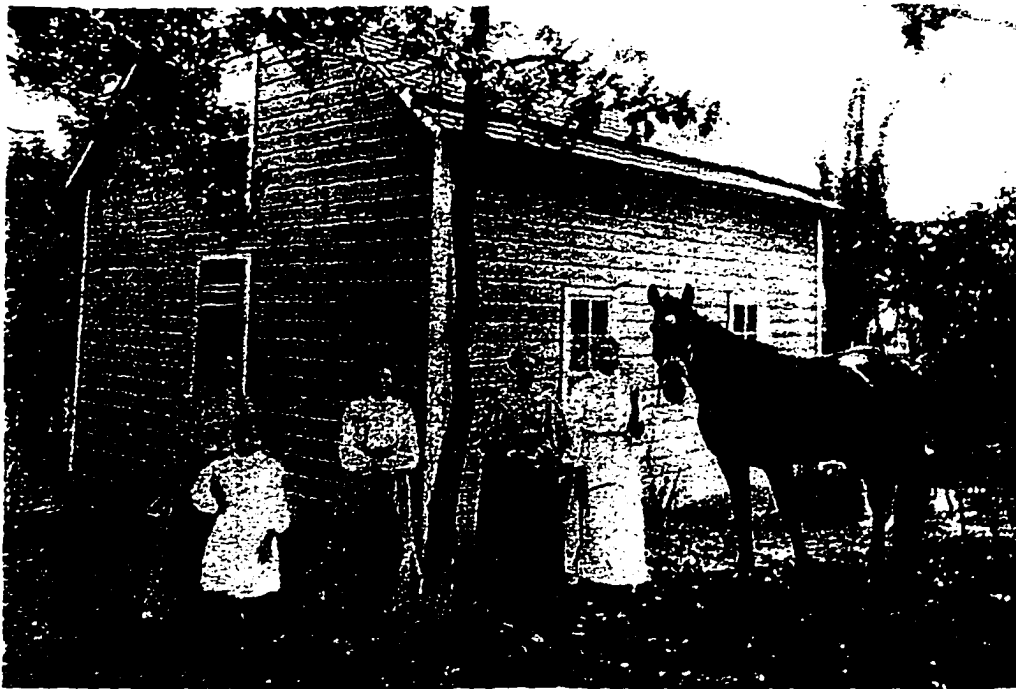


Figure 1. Shirtwaists and skirts. This picture provides evidence on the types of clothing worn on a daily basis by Buxtonites. The women are wearing shirtwaists and skirts. The young girl is wearing a knee length dress with sleeves that puff at the wrists, circa 1903. (From *The Delineator*; skirts January, 1903, shirtwaists, January, 1901, p. 152)



Figure 2. Shirtwaists and skirts. This picture was taken at an ice cream social at the home of one of Buxton's most prominent families, Mrs. J. W. Neeley. Mrs. Booker T Washington was entertained at Mrs. Neeley's home during her visit to Buxton. circa 1900. (From *The Delineator*, skirts January, 1903; shirtwaists, January, 1901, p. 152)



Figure 3. Classroom picture. Young girls are wearing dresses with sleeves that puff before the elbow and then become fitted from elbow to wrist. Some girls appear to be wearing pinafores. Boys are wearing overalls, suits, and a variety of clothing. The children are probably wearing their best for the classroom picture. circa 1902 (From the 1902 *Sears, Roebuck, & Company* catalog, girls dresses, p. 1083, boys suits, p. 1138)



Figure 4. Shirtwaists and skirts. Turn out of the Eastern Star reflects that shirtwaists and skirts were popular. circa 1903 (From *The Delineator*, skirts January, 1903; shirtwaists, 1901, p. 152)



Figure 5. Norfolk jacket. The gentleman on the right is wearing a Norfolk jacket. Norfolk jackets were typically worn for golfing. Both men are wearing aprons of their Masonic order. circa 1909 (From *the Delineator*, February, 1909, p. 201)



Figure 6. The Sears sisters in lingerie dresses. circa 1912. (From *The Delineator*, February, 1912)



Figure 7. The Buxton Teachers. circa 1915-1918 (From *The Iowa State Bystander* March 16, 1915)



Figure 8. Neet Reaves's clothing appears to be of earlier style than the clothing worn by her husband, Payton. Her hairstyle, high collar, and gored skirt are reflective of styles of the early 1900s. Payton's clothing is very much like the men's fashions of 1908-1912. (From *The Delineator*, skirts January, 1903; shirtwaists, January, 1901, p. 152, Payton's vested suit, *The Delineator*, February, 1908, p. 213)



Figure 9. Lottie Armstrong Baxter, daughter of Hobe. circa 1903 (From *The Delineator*, skirt January 1903; shirtwaists, January, 1901, p. 152; from the 1902 *Sears, Roebuck, & Company* catalog, straw hat p. 955, lapel watch, p. 32)

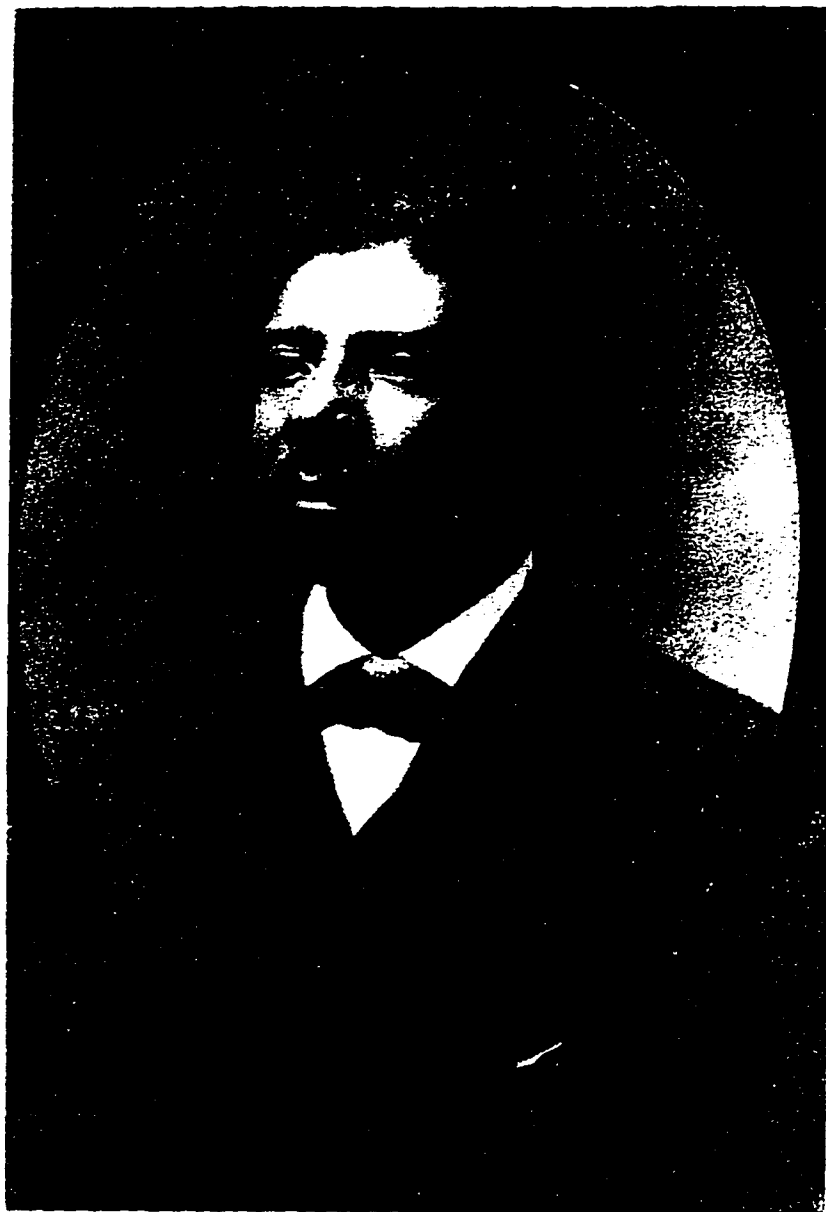


Figure 10. The Honorable George Woodson in business suit and vest. circa 1903 (From the 1902 *Sears, Roebuck, & Company* catalog)



Figure 11. The Honorable George Woodson in business suit and vest with two young ladies. circa 1911-1913 (From *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 29, 1912, p. 2 and from *The Delineator*, (girls dresses) January, 1913, p. 48)



Figure 12. Paul Wilson as a child. Most young boys wore rompers and then knickers as they grew older. circa 1909 (From *The Delineator*, February, 1909, p. 202)



Figure 13. Ed Jones, Sr. wearing a double-breasted jacket. circa 1905. (From *The Iowa State Bystander*, February 10, 1905, p. 4)



Figure 14. The Jones family children are attired in tailored suits and fancy hats. The styles are reflective of the upper status of this family in the Buxton community. circa 1912 (From *The Delineator*, February, 1910, women's tailored suits and hats p. 92; men's derby hat *The Habadasher*, October 1912, p. 10; suit illustrations from *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 29, 1912, p. 2)



Figure 15. The Jones family with father and mother. (From *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 29, 1912, p. 2. Dating of women's clothing from *The Delineator*, April, 1911)



Figure 16. Ed Jones and family. circa 1900-1903. (From *The Delineator*, skirts January, 1903; shirtwaists, January, 1901, p. 152)



Figure 17. Dorothy Neal Collier and brother. circa 1910 (From *The Delineator*, 1908, p. 385)

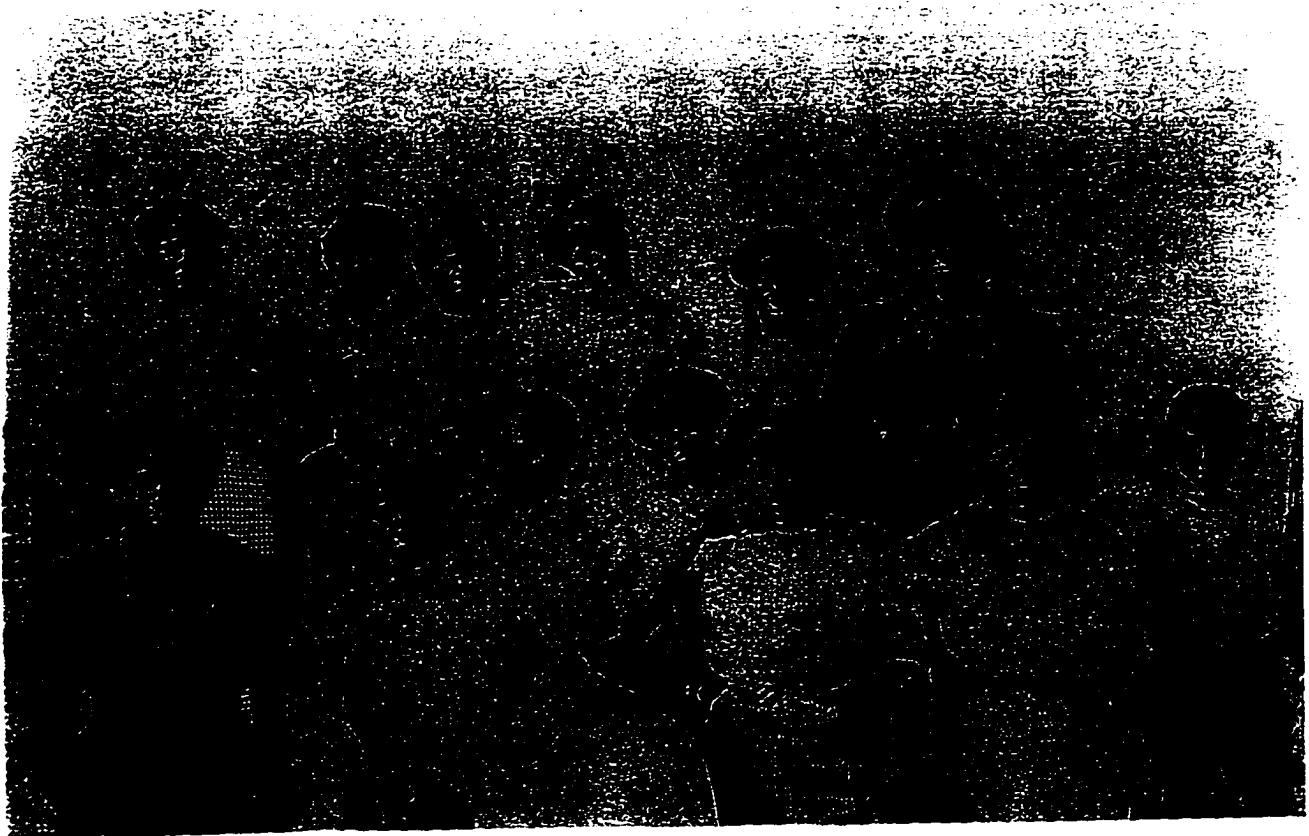


Figure 18. Dorothy Neal Collier's mother (front row, second from the right) circa 1903.
(From *The Delineator*, January, 1903, p. 121)



Figure 19. Dr. and Mrs. Rose Carter. circa 1911-1912. (From *The Delineator*, April, 1911; Men's fashions from *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 29, 1912, p. 2)



Figure 20. Dr. and Mrs. Rose Carter and family. circa 1900 (From *The Delineator*, skirt January, 1903; shirtwaist, January, 1901, p. 152; straw hat from *The Delineator*, August, 1903 p. 206; 3-piece suit and derby, *Sears, Roebuck, & Company*, 1902, p. 1011)



Figure 21. Dr. E. A. Carter. circa 1902 (From the 1902 *Sears, Roebuck, & Company* catalog)

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to gather information about the status, behaviors, and appearances of African Americans who lived in Buxton, Iowa between 1900-1923. The data from the interviews will be used to complete a doctoral dissertation through the College of Family and Consumer Sciences and its Textiles and Clothing Department at Iowa State University. The sessions will involve answering questions about your life in Buxton and about other people who lived there. All the information you provide will be confidential and made available only with your permission. Each session will be tape recorded and transcribed. All information that is recorded will be destroyed two years after the completion of the dissertation.

It will take approximately 3 hours to complete the session which will be conducted in two segments. If at any time during the session you feel uncomfortable and would like to stop, inform the investigator and she will end the session. You may refrain from answering any question that makes you uncomfortable. If you have any questions about the interview process, you may ask them now.

I have read the information and agree to participate in the study under the guidelines stated above.
Yes _____ No _____

I consent to be quoted in publications that might result from this research. Yes ___ No ___

I agree to allow this interview to be used as an information source by the Buxton Club and/or the Iowa Historical Society for individuals who are interested in studying life in Buxton. Yes _____
No _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Marlena Beavers, Graduate Student
Textiles and Clothing Department
Iowa State University

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview for Former Buxton Residents

The following thesis questions will be explored based on the questions developed for the interviews:

- A. Which factors were used to assign status within the Buxton community? what part did dress play in assignment of status in the community?
- B. Role Theory - What impact did occupation or position in the Buxton community have on the way people dresses?
- C. Key factors that distinguish the "Black elite" in African American communities were education, cultural heritage, income level, and social behavior. Was dress used to maintain a certain status within these categories?
- D. As defined by the "Black elite" distinctive cultural background, education, and social affiliations were factors that helped to distinguish the "genteel" from the "non genteel." Was dress or appearance a factor in these distinctions?
- E. Appropriate behavior was also a factor that helped in classifying "well bred" people. What were the rules of behavior and how were they learned?

Interview questions:

Demographic Information

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Birthdate:

Segment 1. In the first segment of questioning I would like to get some general information about you and your family during the time you lived in Buxton.

1. During which years did your family live in Buxton?
2. How many people were in your family?
3. What was your father's occupation? Your mother's occupation?
4. How many years of school did each of your parents complete?
5. How many years of school did others in your family complete?
6. How many years of school did you complete?
7. What approximately was your family's income?
8. Did your family attend a church while living in Buxton?
9. What kinds of social activities were your family involved in while living in Buxton?
10. Did any of these activities require specific types of dress?

Segment 2. This next segment of questions will deal with how people acquired clothing in Buxton. Think for a moment about how you and your family got clothing in Buxton.

11. How was your family clothing acquired? How was clothing acquired by other Buxton residents? (mail order, seamstresses or tailors, company store, hand-me-down in family, from employers or others)

12. E. M. Hammonds was purchasing agent for the company store for some time and spent considerable time in St. Louis and Chicago. this arrangement allowed the company store to display the latest styles and fashions in clothing, furniture and dry goods. Do you remember the clothing that was available for purchase at the company store? In your opinion, what was the quality, cost, variety, and fashionability of the clothing sold there? Did your family purchase clothing from the company store? Do you recall if many people purchased clothing from the company store?

13. The company store also sold name brand goods. Can you think of any clothing items that were considered name brand that your family purchased from the company store?

Segment 3. Occupation and social status in a community often makes it necessary to present a certain appearance to those we come into contact with. The third segment of questioning will deal with occupation, social status and appearance of Buxton residents.

14. As you think about the years you spent in Buxton, were there events or social activities in which you particularly remembered the clothing that people wore?

15. We oftentimes associate certain ways of dressing with specific occupations (ex. doctors wear white coats, businessmen wear suits etc.). How did Buxton's professional people dress? teachers? miners? housewives? pastors? employees for the company store? children? wives of professional men? church goers? women doing chores?

16. How did whites dress in Buxton? professionals? teachers? Miners? housewives? pastors? employees for the company store? children? wives of professional men? church goers? women doing chores?

17. Buxton research gives the impression that some parents allowed their daughters to marry only white men according to one informant. the research doesn't say specifically why? Was skin color related to status in Buxton?

18. In the research that has been completed on Buxton, there is a great deal of emphasis on the nondiscriminating environment that Buxton offered to all people. Though this may have been the case, were there differences in status among the people who lived there? was there an upper, middle, and lower class structure in Buxton? What factors distinguished these groups?

19. Were there individual Blacks in Buxton who would be considered the "elite"?
20. Were there class distinctions made between those residents who lived in company houses and those who purchased acreages from the company and built their own home or those who simply owned their own homes?
21. Did certain jobs require certain types of dress? Ex. Miss Gussie Mardis worked at the company store as head of the dry goods department and Miss Smith worked as a cashier.
22. There were a number of people in Buxton who owned businesses or held high status jobs. I have listed them here. As I call their names, if you remember who they were, tell me as much as you can remember about them. Include appearance, business owned, family members and any other information you would like to include.

Hobe Armstrong - meat market
 D. L. Thomas - restaurant
 Jeffers Brothers - restaurant
 Odessa Booker -store clerk
 Lewis Reasby - lunch wagon
 L. B. Johnson - Sec./YMCA
 James Roberts -cigar maker
 Abe Hart - electrical engineer
 Mary & Willie Parker (\$3500)

George Woodson - lawyer
 A. E. & W. H. London - music/insurance
 W. I. Perkins - hotel owner
 Neeley Brothers - grocers
 Susie London - milliner
 Laura Gibbs - milliner
 Ben Tate - company carpenter
 B. F. Cooper - drug store
 Reuben Gaines - billiard hall & saloon

23. The second major occupation for women in Buxton was teaching according to the 1915 census, followed by dressmaking and hair dressing. Do you recall any of the black teachers in Buxton? Can you describe what they looked like? What was involved in dressmaking and hairdressing listed as occupations by black women in the census?
24. The major occupation for women in Buxton was domestics according to the 1905 and 1915 census. Where did domestics work? (Buxton or surrounding communities) Was there a difference in the way they dressed for specific jobs?
25. There were 21 dressmakers in Buxton in 1905 and only 4 in 1915 according to census records. Can you explain why the number of dressmakers decreased within this time period? Who used dressmakers? Did your family use a dressmaker/tailor?
26. Were there particular individuals that you would have described as prosperous? There were many cases in which black families earned between \$2000 and \$3000 in a year. Can you think of any individuals that would have fit into this category? Who were they and what do you remember about them? Why have you classified them as prosperous?

27. Marjorie Brown reported that she did not remember anytime that her family did not have a carpet on the floor or a piano. What types of things were valued the most in your home? What did those things represent to your family?

28. Some men and women who grew up in coal mining communities stated that they recalled being treated as second class citizens by non-coal mining families. Can you think of any experiences you may have had that made you feel that there was a difference in the way you were treated because of who you were or what your father or mother did for a living?

29. Some members of the non-mining population living in and around Buxton, believed that miners, particularly black miners, lived well (often beyond their means), dressed well, and spent large sums of money on drinking and gambling. Based on what you know about the lifestyle of most miners, what did they spend their money on?

30. Marjorie Brown recalled that “the young men had a social club and had balls by invitation, and everybody that was anybody attended.” The young men wore tailor made suits and the young ladies wore beautiful gowns. Do you recall any of these balls? If so what do you remember most about them? Did you ever attend one of the balls? Were only certain people invited to the balls as Mrs. Brown implies in the comments above or were young people from all walks of life invited to these balls?

31. As stated in the research that has been completed on Buxton, discipline was communal, that is everyone took responsibility of disciplining children in the community. What are some of the rules that you remember learning during your stay in Buxton? (older, guests, preachers, women, men, eating, dressing, courtship, whites, company men, etc.)

32. Black men in Buxton presented a sharp contrast to the experience of black men in other parts of the country. Black males were the primary breadwinners and most black women stayed at home. Inside and outside the home the male had considerable stature as an independent worker and provider for his family. In your opinion, what factors in Buxton contributed to this controlled, secure image of the black man? What factors in the Buxton experience encouraged a feeling of security, accomplishment, and success?

33. How was education viewed by your family? How did you view “getting an education”? How would you describe the people in Buxton who did attain a high school or college education?

34. In some black communities, status is assigned based on the church you attend. Buxton had eight black churches. Can you describe to me what the churches were like (those you remember) and what the people were like who attended them? Mt. Zion, St. John’s AME Church, First Methodist

35. Do you have any pictures, clothing, mementos or anything at all from Buxton that you could share and tell me about?

36. It is difficult sometimes to think of every question that needs to be asked in an interview. Is there anything that you would like to tell me about the people of Buxton related to the way they looked or their status in the community?

Were there people in your family that would have been considered leading citizens in Buxton? Why do you think they were considered leading citizens in the community?

Though you were young when you lived in Buxton, what do you remember most vividly about the people who lived in that community? (Blacks, whites, foreigners. et.).

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